



# *The Reliquary*



## *Illustrated Archæologist.*

JULY, 1907.

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### Reliquaries.

THE history of the goldsmith's craft, as practised in mediæval times in Europe, is one of the most fascinating subjects of that fascinating period. We can form some idea of the importance in which such work was held when we turn to the most valuable treatise we possess on the crafts of the time. In this book (written by a monk whose century and nationality are lost to us, though his name, Theophilus, is still preserved), we find a comprehensive description of the arts of eleventh century Europe, and no less than twenty-four chapters are given to working in metals. Until the close of the fourteenth century this art, with rare exceptions, was entirely devoted to ecclesiastical purposes. The great monasteries and abbeys of the Middle Ages in Europe had each their own workshops, in which they trained their own craftsmen, and so highly was their work prized that a churchman who distinguished himself in this direction was sure of recognition and promotion from both Church and State.

Among the most important of church furnishings were the reliquaries. They were made in gold, silver, ivory, wood, iron, and stone, and were frequently enriched with costly jewels. On them was lavished the most skilled workmanship that the age

could produce. In a short article, dealing generally with so vast a subject, it is impossible to enter into the question of the origin and importance of relics during those early days, attractive as the theme would be. Their effect on the thoughts and actions of mediæval Europe was magical; they possessed an importance far greater than any other influence brought by the Church to bear upon the consciences and wills of mankind. It was but natural, then, that the shrines made to contain these holy objects (which both the learned and ignorant firmly believed to be endowed with supernatural power) should be of fitting magnificence to receive them. Thus it is that the most splendid specimens of metal work were mostly in the form of reliquaries, and in studying these alone we can form a very good idea of the goldsmith's art in that wonderful age.

Reliquaries came into use as early as the sixth century. An old manuscript preserved in the archives at Auxerre contains a complete list of the presents given to the cathedral by Didier, Bishop of Auxerre, about the sixth century, and among them are several. In an interesting list of the works of Eloi, who lived in the seventh century, and who is the first great goldsmith about whom we have definite information, special mention occurs of an important shrine which he made for the church of St. Martin at Tours, besides others to contain relics of saints for churches and cathedrals in various parts of France.

Immediately preceding the reign of Charlemagne the process of embellishing metal with enamel was introduced into Eastern Europe. These enamels must not be confounded with those made in Gaul many centuries earlier; in comparing the two, it is evident that no similarity exists between them. The Eastern enamels were made separately, and mounted in metal bands. Byzantine workmen outshone all others by their skill in this art, which soon became an important article of commerce. The goldsmiths of other countries, not knowing the process, were obliged to send to Byzantium when any were required. This explains why Eastern enamels are found on works of undoubted Western origin. The most ancient example known is a small reliquary dating from the eighth century, which was given to the cathedral of Sion by one of its bishops. Very simple and unpretentious, its chief value lies in the Eastern enamels which decorate it, and which were then very rare in Western Europe.

During the reign of Charlemagne the art of working in metals

received a great impetus. The Emperor was a generous patron of the arts, and bestowed magnificent gifts on the churches and abbeys of his vast empire. Tradition has it that he presented twenty-four different abbeys with reliquaries, each taking the form of a different letter of the alphabet. This may be mere legend, but it is a curious fact, none the less, that we know of

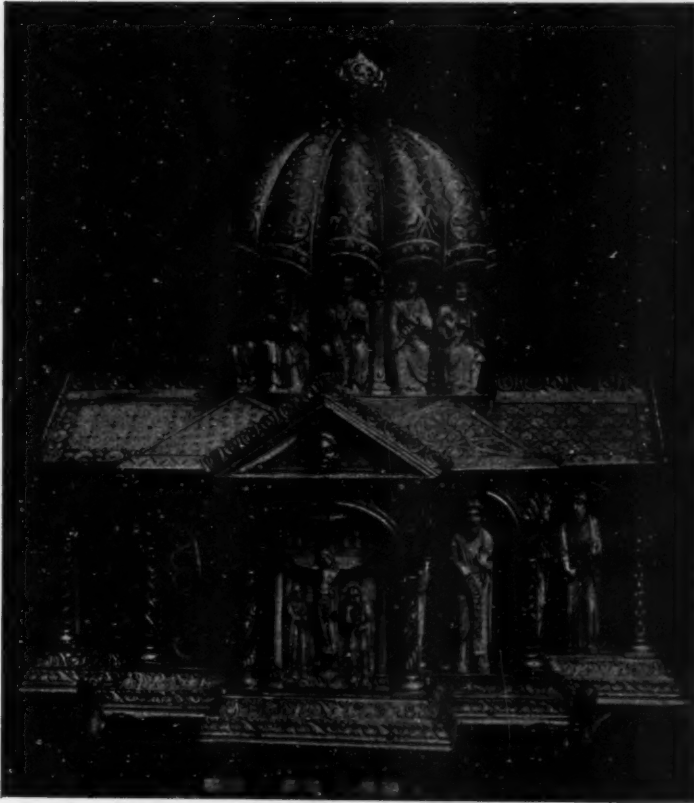


Fig. 1.—Rhenish Byzantine Reliquary, twelfth century.

a papal bull excommunicating some thieves who robbed the church of Brionde of a reliquary in the form of a C, while among the treasures still preserved in the ancient abbey of Conques is a reliquary in the form of an A, and an inventory of the treasures of the Sainte Chapelle of Paris, taken in 1480, mentions two pieces of metal work enriched with jewels in the form of an M. In such

eneration was Charlemagne held that when Frederick Barbarossa obtained his canonization from the anti-pope Pascal in 1166, his body was taken from its tomb and distributed in portions, magnificent reliquaries being made on purpose to receive them.

Till the close of the ninth century the relics of the saints were, as a rule, merely looked upon as objects for veneration, but at that date supernatural powers began to be generally attributed to them. They were supposed to work miracles, cure diseases, and bring deliverance from all dangers and ills. Their bodies were not the only vehicles through which these wonders were worked, their clothes and other possessions, the ground on which they had walked, or in which they had been buried, were all credited with supernatural qualities; and as the worship of relics increased so did the demand for the shrines in which they were to be placed, till a beautiful reliquary became the most suitable and acceptable present for a potentate to bestow on cathedral, abbey, or church. Abbots and bishops thought it not beneath their dignity to work at them themselves. At Angers the bishop Perpetuus (dying in 877) made two reliquaries in the form of churches. Among the most celebrated shrines of this period was one which the newly-made king, Eudes, presented to the Abbey of St. Germain des Prés, in gratitude for victories over the Normans. It was a magnificent specimen of the goldsmith's art of the period, and was covered with gold plate and precious stones. This shrine remained intact till the early part of the fifteenth century, when the reigning abbot sent it to the three celebrated Parisian goldsmiths, Jean de Clichy, Gautier Dufour, and Guillaume Boey, with orders to melt it down and re-construct another more in the fashion of the period. They made one representing a church in the Gothic style; twenty-six marks of gold, two hundred and fifty marks of silver, two hundred and sixty precious stones, and one hundred and eighty-seven pearls were used in its manufacture. That it was a superb piece of workmanship we can see by the engraving given by Brouillard in his *Histoire de l'Abbaye de Saint Germain des Prés*; but however great its beauty, it is impossible not to regret the destruction of the offering of King Eudes.

In the eleventh and succeeding centuries all that was best in the goldsmith's art, both in material and skill, was lavished upon reliquaries. Chartres at that time possessed a celebrated goldsmith named Theudon, and among his finest pieces of work was a gold reliquary made for the most precious of the town's



relics, the shift of the Virgin. At this period Limoges became celebrated for its enamels, and it was specially in the decoration of reliquaries that the new art was employed. The churches of the diocese became rich in them—the Abbey of Grandmont possessed thirty; most have now disappeared. Many were sold to inferior metal workers when their value was not recognised, and public and private collections contain the rest. Among them is the beautiful reliquary of St. Calmine, which for a long time was included in the Soltykoff collection, and the remains of that of St. Etienne de Muset, which can now be seen in the Cluny Museum. The fame of the Limoges enamels extended to other countries; in England they were greatly prized. An old document, cited in the *Archæological Journal* some years ago, tells us of the expenses incurred by sending a messenger to Limoges to see about the construction of a shrine to contain the body of Walter de Merton, Bishop of Rochester.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the rage for reliquaries reached its height. Never was a larger number made in gold, silver, and silver-gilt, besides baser metals. During the Middle Ages precious metals were not abundant, and many shrines and reliquaries were made in copper; they were chased, gilt, and enriched with jewels and enamels. Until the close of the thirteenth century enamel upon gold was employed by France, Italy, and Germany for work of more than usual magnificence. The shrine presented by Frederick Barbarossa to the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle was made by this process.

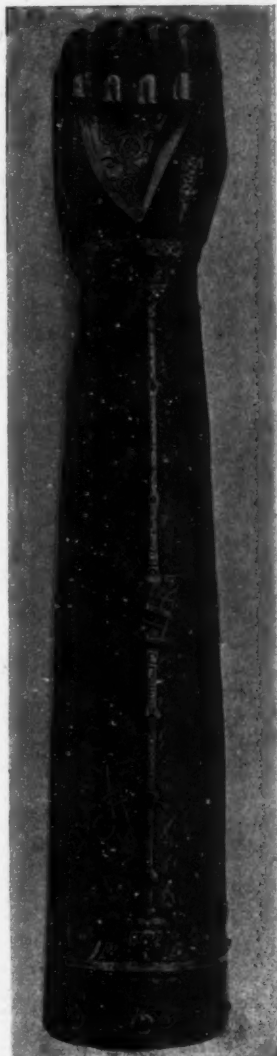


Fig. 2.—Shrine of St. Lactin's Arm in the Museum of the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin.

It was about this time that Germany took a foremost place in the art of the day. Cologne was the centre of the artistic movement, and the towns along the borders of the Rhine. Here, under the guidance of Eastern artists, a generation of magnificent craftsmen sprang up, and the making of shrines and reliquaries occupied a great deal of their time. It was natural that this should be so. Cologne had long been celebrated for numerous relics of more than usual value, and these required suitable shrines for their reception. Of world-wide renown is that of the Magi; the front of the shrine, through which the skulls of the three kings can be seen, is surrounded by a gold border adorned with enamel ornaments in gold filigree, and an infinite number of pearls and precious stones, including an Oriental topaz as large as a pigeon's egg, and valued at about thirty thousand florins. Each of the trefoil arches of the upper tier on the longer side of the shrine is cut out of a single plate of metal, enriched with *champlevé* enamel. The shrine itself is set upon a pedestal of brass in the midst of a square mausoleum, faced without and within with marble and jasper. The diocese of Cologne still possesses over twenty examples of twelfth century German reliquaries, and a description of the majority has been published. Among the most important are those<sup>1</sup> at Aix-la-Chapelle, of St. Servais at Maestricht, and of St. Sibold at Nuremberg; some are to be found in the private and public museums of Europe. The peculiar beauty of these shrines lies in their decoration, and not in the value of the metals themselves; many substances, such as jewels, ivory, and, latterly, brilliant incrustations of enamel, were freely used, and to their beauty was added that of the most delicate carving and engraving. It would be difficult to find a more perfect specimen of twelfth-century German reliquaries than the original of the accompanying illustration (fig. 1). In the form of a cross, with limbs of equal length, it is surmounted by a dome, round which are grouped twelve statuettes of the Apostles, while ivory plaques on which are carved the Nativity, the Magi on horseback, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, are on the porticoes of each of the four sides. The roof and columns are entirely covered with enamel, which displays an extraordinary number of designs. Copper-gilt, ivory, and enamel are the only materials used, but these are employed with marvellous skill and with perfect taste. Although of undoubted German origin, this shrine shows distinct traces of Byzantine influence, making it all the more unique and valuable.

Ancient Celtic art had always followed original lines, quite distinct and apart from that of the rest of Europe; it is, there-

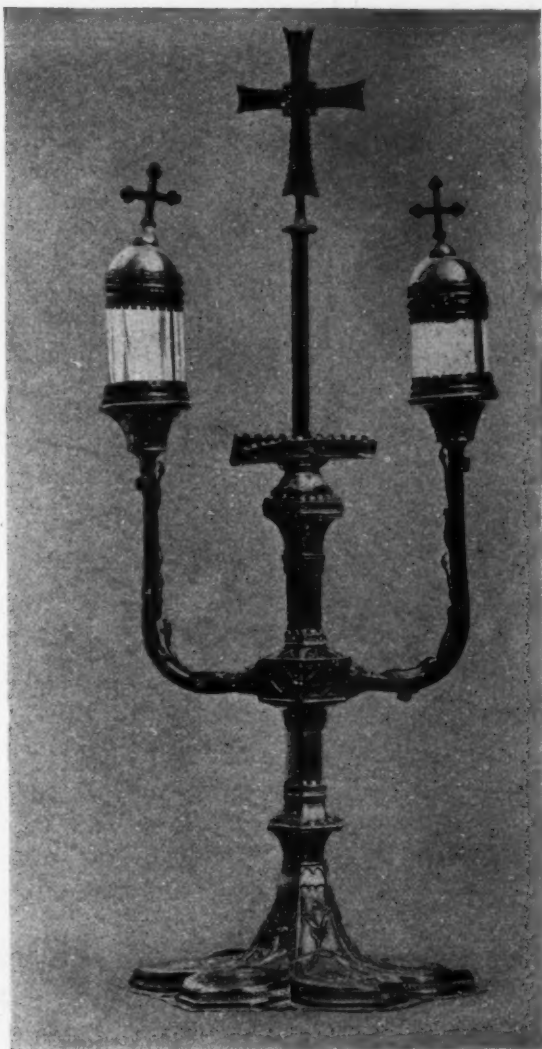


Fig. 3.—Reliquary, fourteenth century.

fore, to be expected that Ireland should produce reliquaries of a style all her own. A few are still in existence, among the most

remarkable and unique are those made to contain bells. Many of the Irish saints led lives of the most absolute seclusion, and the bells of their hermitages became to them living voices—companions in their solitude, and, later on, objects of veneration. These bells were often enclosed in shrines of exquisite workmanship.

The beginning of the thirteenth century saw a complete revolution in all branches of metal work. Especially is this change noted in the reliquaries; the heavy Roman patterns, charged with Byzantine influence, were abandoned in favour of light, elegant designs, and the value of the objects consisted more in the finish of the work and in the beauty of the design than in the actual richness of the material and the decorations. France was the cradle of the new style, and the few exquisite pieces which have survived the Revolution give us a high opinion of the twelfth-century metal workers. All historians mention St. Louis' passion for relics and the magnificence of the shrines he caused to be made for their reception. One beautiful specimen is preserved in the Abbey of St. Maurice d'Agaune. It was made to hold a thorn from the crown, and consists of a simple oval mount in gold and silver-gilt, slightly ornamented with a few jewels and some pearls. Its intrinsic value is small, but its simplicity and purity of style is unsurpassed, and is only to be found in great periods of art, such as the thirteenth century proved to be. At this time England occupied a foremost place in the artistic history of the world, and her metal work was of a high degree of excellence. Henry III. spent large sums in encouraging art. The Record Office contains a long and interesting account of his expenditures in this direction. Among the most celebrated was a shrine of pure gold, studded with jewels of enormous value, which he had made to contain the body of Edward the Confessor; it was one of the costliest works of the Middle Ages.

Many of the thirteenth-century reliquaries were made in the form of churches, and they came under the same influence as the architecture. One of the most celebrated examples was the great shrine of St. Genevieve, completed after two years' work in 1212 by the artist Bonnard, of Paris. Seven and a half marks of gold, ninety-three marks of silver, and many jewels were employed in its manufacture; it was ornamented with statues of saints and bas-reliefs. This shrine, which had been several times stolen, vanished during the Revolution. Several others

are, however, still extant, among them those of St. Julie at Jouarre, St. Taurin d'Evreux, and Nivelles. All three are in the



Fig. 4.—Bust Reliquary in copper-gilt. Swiss, early sixteenth century.

form of Gothic churches; the latter, which has, unfortunately, been several times restored, is perhaps the most beautiful. The



order for its execution was given in 1272, together with three hundred and fifty marks of silver and many precious stones, but it was twenty-six years later before it was ready to receive the saint's relics. Towards the end of the century the large shrines so generally used became increasingly rare—by this time few of the bodies of the saints remained intact; they were, therefore, unnecessary, and in making reliquaries for special objects the form of the shrine took that of the relic it was destined to contain. Bust reliquaries were often made for the heads of saints. One of these is included among the most remarkable examples of metal work that the thirteenth century produced. The bust, which was life size, was made to receive a portion of the head of St. Louis, and it was bestowed upon the Sainte Chapelle du Palais by Philip the Good on the occasion of the royal saint's canonization in 1297; sixty-three marks of gold were employed. The bust is supported by angels and surmounted by a gold crown in four divisions, each enriched with a large sapphire, six rubies, four pearls, and sixteen emeralds; forty rubies, forty emeralds, four sapphires, a large chrysoprase surrounded with garnets, and four knobs of rock-crystal are spread over other parts of the bust, which in its turn rests on a socle of silver-gilt supported by four lions, and around are grouped thirty figures of kings and princes with their names and a long inscription. The head of St. Oswald is still to be seen in a shrine of the same shape in the cathedral at Hildesheim, while the arms of SS. Gereon and Cunibert are in arm-shaped reliquaries at Cologne.

During the fourteenth century reliquaries in the form of churches were mostly made for cathedrals only, statuettes in gold and silver to enclose relics were the favourite device for chapels and oratories. In an inventory of the possessions of Charles V. some of them are thus inscribed: "Ung ymage d'or de Sainte Jehan l'Euangeliste tenant ung reliquaire ou est una grosse perle." "Douze ymages des douze apostres d'argent doré, tenant reliquaires en une main, et en l'autre espées, glaives, bastons et Cailloux, assis chacun sur un entablement d'argent doré esmaillé des armes de France." Groups of figures were often used as reliquaries. In 1368 Charles V. presented the Abbey of St. Denis with a group in silver-gilt representing himself, his wife, and children at the feet of the Magdalen. Few of these reliquary statues remain to-day. Several, however, are to be seen at the Louvre and Cluny museums. One of the most beautiful is now

in the Louvre; it is a statue of the Virgin, given by Queen Jeanne d'Evreux in 1344 to the Abbey of St. Denis. The figure is standing on a pedestal of enamel, ornamented with small figures in bas-relief. In one hand she holds a fleur-de-lys, which, we are told, formerly enclosed the hair of the Virgin. It is to the famous fourteenth century reliquary at Orvieto that most authorities date the invention of painting on enamel. This reliquary, which was made to contain the holy corporal of Bolsena, is a miniature model of the cathedral of Orvieto. The front is divided into twelve compartments, each containing an enamel upon which is represented scenes relating to the miracle. By order of Urban the Fourth the relic was transferred to Orvieto. An inscription tells us it was made by Maestro Ugolino, of Siena, in 1338.

At this period faith in the virtues of saintly relics reached its height. Venice offered in vain ten thousand ducats for a seamless



Fig. 5.—Silver-gilt Reliquary, enclosing a carved wood cross. Russian. Victoria and Albert Museum, 559-1883.

coat of Christ, Siena and Perugia went to war over the wedding ring of the Virgin ; fashionable shrines were thronged with pilgrims, and the wealth spent on enriching them was fabulous. With the advent of the Renaissance ecclesiastical metal work gradually gave place to that of a more secular character, though what was still made retained its special and traditional features. Francis I. bestowed a gold bust on a pedestal of silver-gilt on the Sainte Chapelle du Palais; he caused it to be made in his own likeness. This bust no longer exists. In an inventory of 1573 it is referred to as "ayant été pris et fondu pour les affaires du roi." Spain still possessed a flourishing school of artist metal workers, who produced fine specimens of an ecclesiastical character. Celebrated among them was Juan de Arfé, who, in 1597, received an important commission to execute sixty-four life-sized busts, destined to contain relics, for the Palace of the Escorial ; but the spirit of the olden days, when the making of shrines and reliquaries by monkish craftsmen was looked upon by them as a work akin to worship, was dead—it had now degenerated into a merely commercial transaction, and as such no longer claims our interest in the same degree. Reliquaries, however, still continued to be made in ever decreasing numbers, and among the most celebrated works of the nineteenth century are two, made by Froment and Meurice, and a magnificent specimen after a design by Viollet le Duc.

EVELINE B. MITFORD.



## Sorcery in England.

**S**ORCERY consisted mainly of charms to ward off the evil eye and other malign influences, and to counteract their effects, and is of very ancient origin, being undoubtedly Persian and therefore strongly astronomical.

The ancient Persians worshipped the sun by the name of Mithras, and the first illustration represents their form of worship. It is a carved stone and shows a Persian priest before a four-post altar on which is the seven-rayed sun (it is impossible to explain the curious object at the back of the altar). The rites of Mithras were introduced to Rome after the conquest of Pontus in Asia Minor by Pompey. The Gnostics and Basilideans borrowed largely from these rites, and it was they who handed down sorcery to the Middle Ages. These semi-Christian sects made charms (known as Abraxas), which were mostly carved stones of the second and third centuries A.D., and are found in all parts of the old Roman Empire.



Carved stone of Persian origin, showing a Persian priest worshipping before an altar on which is a representation of the sun.

One of their charms was the word ABRACADABRA, used as follows—

A B R A C A D A B R A  
 A B R A C A D A B R  
 A B R A C A D A B  
 A B R A C A D A  
 A B R A C A D  
 A B R A C A  
 A B R A C  
 A B R A  
 A B R  
 A B  
 A

This was hung from the patient's neck, and one letter was torn off every day.

They used numbers as charms, seven being a very potent one, it was the most sacred number amongst all nations of high

antiquity. The "powers" of Basilides of Alexandria were seven, viz., Spirit, Reason, Thought, Wisdom, Might, Holiness, and Peace. Astronomically, it represented the seven planets and the days of the week. There were seven altars in many of the Persian temples of Mithras, and the image of the sun in the first illustration is seven-rayed; the altar also contains this number, being formed of four posts supported on a tripod.

Four and twelve were also sacred numbers: four the number of the seasons, and twelve for the months of the year.

Another very important number of the Gnostics was 365, the number of days in the year. According to the numeration of the Greek letters which they used, Abraxas was counted as 365—

A	B	R	A	X	A	S
I	2	100	I	60	I	200

We frequently find the name Mithras on these Abraxas, and then generally written Meithras, when it also numbers 365—

M	E	I	Θ	P	A	C
40	5	10	9	100	I	200

Mithras, therefore, not only represented the Sun god, but also the number of his days, and denotes both the Persian origin and the astronomical tendency of the Abraxas. Their use as amulets or charms is shown plainly by inscriptions on many of the stones themselves, such as "Jao . Abraxas Adonai, holy name, favourable powers, guard Vibius Paulinus from every bad demon." A very common one is ΑΠΟ ΠΑΝΤΟΣ ΚΑΚΟΥ ΔΑΙΜΟΝΟΣ, which might be taken by all wicked demons as a hint to keep at a distance.

Montfaucon, from whose work these illustrations of the Abraxas are taken, states that they were given as "preservatives" by the Basilideans. The illustrations numbered 1 to 13 are Abraxas of about the second or third centuries, made for, and used as charms by those old sorcerers.

It is startling to find these charms in common use in England at the present day. I refer to the face pieces and terrets with which cart-horses are adorned all over England. Horses were of great value in the Middle Ages, and of more importance to their riders than anything else perhaps except the sword. They were always subject to sudden attacks of illness or lameness, which might cost their owner his life, and these attacks were invariably ascribed to elves, witchcraft, or the evil eye, for which reasons the horse would be specially amuletted to protect it and its rider.



These amulets are still in use as ornaments, and show their origin with absolute plainness.

The sketches of horses' amulets (illustrations *A* to *Q*) are taken from those now in use. They are of brass, some fairly old, others quite modern; the designs, however, are not modern, neither are they English.

The striking resemblance between Amulet *A* and Abraxas



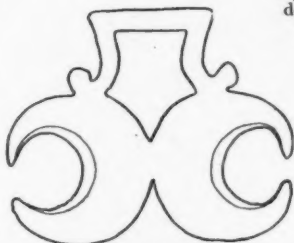
*A.*—Amulet of the crescent and star design.



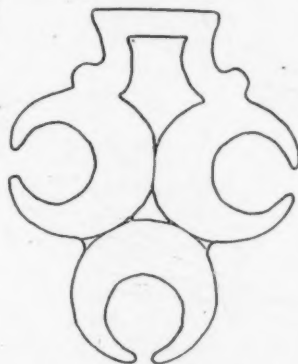
*B.*—The crescent used as an amulet.



*Fig. 1.*—Abraxas showing crescent and star design and a circle of smaller stars.



*C.*—Amulet in the form of two crescents, back to back.



*D.*—Amulet of the triple hecate—three crescents.

*fig. 1* cannot fail to arrest the attention of one who compares them for the first time. Indeed, with the exception of the six smaller stars in the Abraxas, they are identical even to the shape of the crescent and the number of points to the star. This amulet is far the commonest in this district (South Lincolnshire), and is certainly an exquisite design. One cannot go far on a market day without meeting many cart-horses with it on their foreheads.

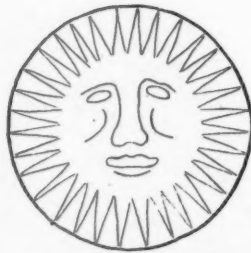
The crescent is equally common on the Abraxas as on the amulets. The radiant face of the sun is seen in amulet *E* and in Abraxas figs. 2 and 3, and is the face of Abraxas or Mithras the great Sun god, whose number was 365; the circle, also, was sacred to the sun, and represented its perfection. Circles of stars, as in amulet *F*, are very frequent in the Abraxas, *e.g.*, figs. 1, 2, 5, 9, and 11. The cock was sacred to the sun, perhaps on account



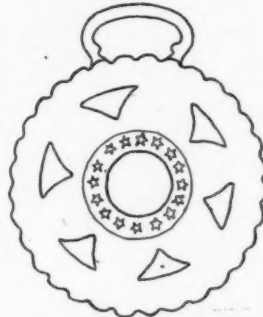
Fig. 2.—Abraxas of the radiant face of the sun (Apollo) surrounded by three stars and the crescent underneath. Also the symbols of Mars and Venus.



Fig. 3.—Abraxas showing the radiant face of Apollo, surmounted by a star and with a crescent beneath. Underneath is a snake forming a curious knot.



*E.*—Amulet of the radiant face of the sun.



*F.*—Amulet shewing circle of stars.

of its irritating and pernicious habit of crowing at sunrise, and was also used in divination by the ancient Greeks. The letters of the alphabet having been written in a circle on dusty ground, a grain of corn was placed on each. A "magically prepared" cock was then let loose amongst them, and the letters from which he selected his food gave the required answer to the diviners.

The use of the cock as an amulet for disease may be derived from the custom amongst the ancient Greeks of sacrificing a cock to Æsculapius on recovering from an illness. Socrates with his last breath desired that a cock should be paid as his debt to Æsculapius, signifying that by death he was cured from all diseases. The cock is the only bird (except rarely the swan) found on these amulets; it is extremely common on the Abraxas.



Fig. 4.—Abraxas of composite figure of Abraxas, with head of a cock and lower extremities in the form of snakes. He bears the shield and whip of Apollo.  
On the reverse.—Ias abrasax sabaoth.



G.—"Flying terret" in the form of a cock.



Fig. 5.—Abraxas showing the composite figure of Abraxas, with head of cock and lower extremities in the form of snakes.

Amulet G is known as a flying terret, and is worn at the top of the head. The Abraxas cock is seen in figs. 4 and 5.

The snake is another sun-symbol, especially when drawn with its tail in its mouth, when it represents the course of the sun. One of the commonest popular superstitions in districts where snakes abound is that if one be killed and left lying in the sun it will come to life again. This is the more striking in that the

reverse is known to hold good with any other animal; it also signified wisdom, and its use as an amulet to ward off or cure disease may be instanced in the brazen serpent of Moses and in the staff of Æsculapius.

The coiled rope round the centre of amulet *H* may be taken to represent the snake, a radiant rope would be too absurd, even if it were a ship's quoit. Rapidity and carelessness of production, mechanical and rough workmanship, and ignorance of the meaning might easily account for the loss of the head in the course of ages.

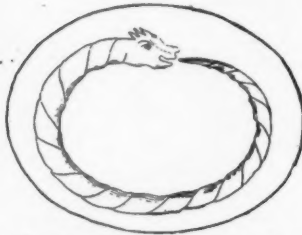


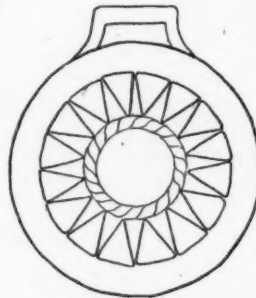
Fig. 6.—Abraxas of snake in the form of a circle.



Fig. 7.—Abraxas showing snake with crescent and star.



Fig. 8.—Abraxas showing snake with radiant lion's head.



*H.*—Amulet bearing a conventionalised snake, surrounded by rays.



Fig. 9.—Abraxas showing snake with radiant lion's head and circle of stars.

The snake in Abraxas fig. 6 is a very common form; other snake designs are seen in Abraxas figs. 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9. The coiled rope appearance of the snake is most noticeable in Abraxas figs. 6 and 9.

The horse (amulet *K* and Abraxas fig. 10) is a design natural to both; its appearance on harness is only to be expected. On the Abraxas Apollo driving his team of four horses signifies the sun and the four seasons—spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The Scythians sacrificed horses to the sun.

The lion occurs very frequently on the Abraxas, *e.g.*, fig. 11, and is, I believe, the only mammal, besides the horse, found on these amulets. It is shown in amulet *L*. The lion was a sun-symbol on the abraxas, and denoted strength. The Egyptians ornamented the doors of their temples with the gaping mouth of a lion, and it is still used with us for door knockers. According to Horapollo "being a type of the inundation, in consequence of the Nile rising more abundantly when the sun is in Leo, those (Egyptians) who anciently presided over the sacred works made



*K*.—Amulet of a horse, surrounded by a circle of triangles, and then a circle of semi-circles.



Fig. 10.—Abraxas of Apollo driving his team of four horses.



Fig. 11.—Abraxas showing lion and circle of stars.



*L*.—Amulet of horse-shoe shape bearing a lion.

the water-spouts and passages of fountains in the form of lions." Many water-spouts terminating in lions' heads still remain on the old Egyptian temples. Sir Thomas Browne gave this as the reason why spouts in England were so frequently ornamented with lions' heads in his day. His remarks are equally applicable at the present time.

The lotus is represented on amulet *M*, as will be plainly seen if it be compared with Abraxas fig. 12: it cannot be otherwise—the resemblance is too distinct.

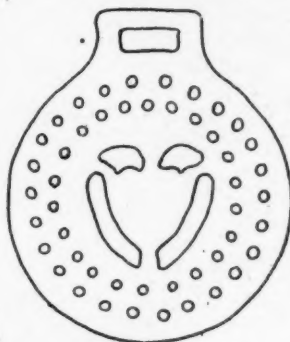


Abraxas fig. 12 probably represents the New Year, and in amulet *M* the lotus certainly represents the year, being surrounded by twelve moons (months).

Amulets *M*, *N*, and *O* form an exceptionally interesting series, showing plainly the development of the heart (as a charm) from the lotus bloom. Another form of the lotus is seen in amulet *P*.



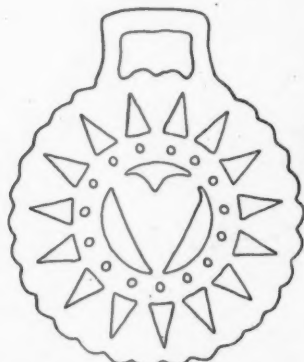
*M*.—Amulet with lotus in the centre, surrounded by twelve crescents.



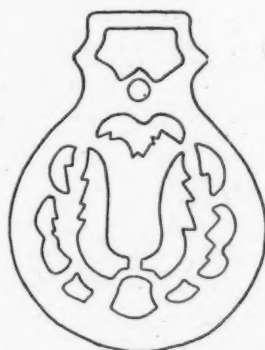
*N*.—Amulet of conventional heart, surrounded by two circles of small holes.



Fig. 12.—Abraxas of the figure of Apollo rising from a lotus flower, probably signifying the new year.



*O*.—Amulet with heart in the centre surrounded by a circle of small holes and then by an outer circle of conventionalised hearts.



*P*.—Amulet with conventional lotus.

In the centre of amulet *Q* is the knot—this is connected rather with witchcraft than with sorcery.

Raising storms or bewitching people by tying knots was the usual form of Lapland witchcraft. Few inherently harmless actions can be performed with such pure vice as can the tying of a knot; few can be done with such diabolical determination or lend themselves as such aids to the expression of deadly hatred.

A curious instance of this is given in "The Story of Earl Rognvald" in "The Orkneyinga Saga." In 1152 Earl Rognvald made a pilgrimage to Palestine; when they reached the Jordan he and Sigmund Angle "swam across the river and went up on the bank there, and thither where was a thicket of brushwood, and there they twisted great knots—

Then the Earl sang :

"For the men a coil I twisted,  
Of the way-thong on the heath  
Out on Jordan's further bank.  
Clever woman this will learn ;  
But I trow that it will seem  
Long to go so far as this,  
To all lazy stay-at-homes—  
On wide fields the blood falls warm."

Then Sigmund sang :

"I will wreath another knot  
For the sloth who stays at home ;  
Sooth to say that we have set  
For his child a snare to-day."

The Earl sang :

"To the coward here we twine  
In the thickest close a knot,  
On this feast of Holy Lawrence ;  
Tired to quarters good I came."



Q.—Amulet bearing a rope knot.

This startling mixture of devout Christianity with the most shameless heathen witchcraft is typical of the childish minds of those great northern warriors. At the present day pieces of a hangman's rope are much sought after, either as charms or for witchcraft. Of course the modern use of the knot is to denote courtship, itself considered a sort of witchcraft by some benedicts ; the knot is also used to cure warts : take a piece of string and tie as many knots in it as there are warts to be cured, touch each wart with a knot and then throw the string away. As the knots decay so will the warts disappear. This form of white witchcraft is devoutly believed in by thousands of people at the present day.

With the exception of the knot, all these amulets show a clear relationship with the pure sorcery of the Abraxas. It is interesting to find traces of the word-charms of these old sorcerers. The very word *Magic* is of Persian origin, being derived from *Magi*.

"Witches' Sabbaths" were so called because witches were confounded with sorcerers. It was at a Sabbath of Sorcerers in Paris that Antichrist was baptised according to a report in the

year 1600. The name is in no way connected with the Jewish weekly festival; it refers to a meeting and not to a special day. In *The Count of Gabalis* (Paris 1671) we are informed that this assembly took its name from *Sabazius*. It is highly probable that *Sabaoth* so often found on the Abraxas is really meant to refer to *Sabazius*, the Dionysian Sun god. It does not refer to "hosts." Jao, Sabaoth, Adonai, Abraxas and Meithras are more often used on these old charms than any other names. Although these curious sects hardly survived the third century, yet we find Alexander of Tralles, in the year 550 A.D., recommending this incantation as part of a very complicated cure for gout: "I invoke thee by the holy names, Jao, Sabaoth, Adonai, Elvi."

In one of the Anglo-Saxon Leech books of the tenth century we find the following:—"Against elf disease, write this writing: 'Scriptum est, rex regnum et dominus dominantium Veronica,



Fig. 13.—Abraxas of Jupiter, holding a thunderbolt. On the reverse, the inscription:—  
Iao sabaoth.

Veronica . . . . . IAO ἅγιος ἅγιος ἅγιος, sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, dominus, deus, Sabaoth, amen alleluiah.' " Jao Sabaothis the inscription on Abraxas fig. 13, as on many others. Probably expert demonologists could give numerous examples of the use of these words from the abraxas as charms.

The charm ABRACADABRA mentioned previously might be referred to, and there is an interesting mention of another charm by Brand, in *Popular Antiquities*. He quotes from Lodge—"Bring him but a table of Lead, with Crosses and Adonai or Elohim written in it, he thinks it will heal the Ague." The last illustration of Abraxas in Montfaucon are of tables (tablets) of lead.

In England to-day women curtsy to the new moon; many people refuse to sit down thirteen to dinner (the superstition of ill luck connected with this number dating at least from the time of the siege of Jericho), and farmers will not have a pig killed while the moon is on the wane. Little silver hands, or rabbits' feet, are still used to warn off the malign influence of the Evil Eye in a peacock's feather.

In Worcestershire they sow parsley on Good Friday because it has to go down to the Devil nine times before it will grow. Frogs are still stitched in silk bags for sick babies to chew—the frogs die (always) and the babies recover (sometimes). Children

with whooping cough are sent into the beanfields in order that as the bean flowers fade the whooping cough may pass away with them.

The modern belief in magic rings for rheumatism shows greater superstition than was held in the olden days, when it was a *sine qua non* that the ring should not be paid for. The old sorcerers held that the circle and the right-angled triangle were sacred. To-day country people think it unlucky to walk across a fairy ring, and dwellers in towns object to passing under a ladder.

Error and superstition die hard. Doubtless they were thought to be dead centuries ago, and without doubt they will retain their powers for centuries to come. The logical and scientific mind is a modern development in England, and has little power over the people of remote country districts; with them hatred is more powerful than love—fear than ambition.

As the power of religion wanes superstition takes its place, and that most powerfully amongst the badly educated. Words and methods may change, but the spirit will remain while the world lasts, or at least while men are subject in their thoughts and actions to the demoniacal influences of hate and pride and fear.

S. HERBERT PERRY.



## Monastic Custodians of Ancient Books.

THE researches into a remote past and the excavations at Nineveh during the last century have resulted in many interesting discoveries, which have conclusively proved that libraries, when implying a large collection of archives or historic records, are of very ancient origin. They date back to an age when hieroglyphics took the place of the present modern letters, when minute cruciform inscriptions covered the curious clay-tablets which composed the valuable library of more than ten thousand works of the great Assyrian monarch, Assur-bani-pal, several centuries before the birth of the Redeemer. Nor were the Babylonians left without a supply of good literature, having possessed, still earlier, "libraries of clay," as these collections of baked bricks inscribed with intricate characters are often designated. Even in that distant age these appear to have consisted of many varied works and compositions, including grammars and poetry addressed to the gods, all being well arranged with method and order in their respective places.

With the advance of civilisation the love of letters and the fine arts grew, when much care and attention were bestowed by various sovereigns on their private collections of costly volumes. These were quickly followed by more public libraries in several important European cities. Rome was especially rich in these depositaries of learning, the Emperor Augustus establishing two for the benefit of his subjects; and his royal successors, emulated by his example, founded many others in their dominions. Some of the most famous libraries were those set up in Alexandria during the successive reigns of the Ptolemies, those true patrons of letters and science, none of whom spared either trouble or expense in securing the most extensive collections of varied literature in the world at that period.

With the progress of Christianity it soon became a recognised necessity for the Church to institute and control Christian libraries for the spread of religious truths and sacred history. Thus we find that the pioneers or fathers of the early Church invariably



organised an establishment for the reception of doctrinal and other books for the education and enlightenment of the people, placing each under the management and in the hands of the Church. In the fifth century A.D. St. Augustine had written a considerable number of controversial and theological treatises, and had gathered together many writings and manuscripts of great interest, all of which he left as a legacy to the Church, and were added to the library already founded at Hippo, the seat of his Bishopric, for the instruction of the faithful or for the edification of anxious enquirers in search of truth and knowledge. These happily escaped destruction, but most of the ancient Italian libraries, unfortunately, fell a prey to the hordes of Vandals and



Fig. 1.—Wimborne Minster, Dorset. Library of Chained Books.  
(J. Pottle, photo.).

other warlike barbarians, who ruthlessly swept away these priceless relics at a time when they conquered and overthrew the "Mighty Monarchies" of the Western Empire. Those that were not destroyed by these unlettered heathen were dispersed, and for many years there was no general demand for literature or any public enthusiasm displayed for study of any description. But even in those dark days there were still some who carefully guarded the precious heritage entrusted to them; these were the monks, who, within the sheltering seclusion of their cloisters, received and rigidly preserved the volumes which had been sent to their monasteries for safety in the hour of plunder and danger.

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No better custodians could have been appointed, for not only were the valued documents secured from impious hands within the monastic walls, but the religious brothers set themselves diligently to make literal copies from the original works, thus multiplying and handing down to posterity these valuable archives. Thus the Church became more and more the exclusive guardian of ancient records and of education. The great scholar, the Venerable Bede, did much to re-kindle the dying embers of learning throughout Northumbria, when, in the retirement of the monastery, he spent the greater part of his time in teaching and in literary pursuits, orally communicating to his contemporaries much useful knowledge, in addition to forming and,



Fig. 2.—Whalley Abbey Church, Lanc. Old Chained Books.

eventually, bequeathing a library of intrinsic importance to the community.

To each large monastery that St. Benedict founded he expressly ordained that a library should be attached, a command that was strictly enforced, and it became the duty of the pious inmates to collect and to transcribe theological and other ancient manuscripts. Henceforth, these asylums and homes of the Benedictines and Cistercians became the centres of religious activity and industry, where the monks diligently copied the works of the early fathers of the Church, and multiplied the rare and costly manuscripts with unflagging perseverance. A Scriptorium was built to each abbey, and in this small apartment the brothers assiduously

worked ; but the great majority of the monks performed their task with untiring zeal and exactness more in compulsory obedience to their rule than from any real devotion to literature. Still, mankind owes a debt of gratitude to these painstaking scribes of the Middle Ages, who have preserved intact so many



Fig. 3.—Hereford Cathedral. Library of Chained Books.  
(U. Thirwall, *Hereford, photo.*)

interesting manuscripts. The inmates of the monastic houses searched for valuable parchments and documents among the famous libraries of the world, and spent large sums of money in the purchase of the coveted treasures. These were conveyed safely to the monastery, where they were copied by the monks

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in the Scriptorium. But the early writers did not only reproduce the works of others; many of them wrote the history of their own establishment and the biographies of those who made up the community. Numerous elaborate missals and breviaries

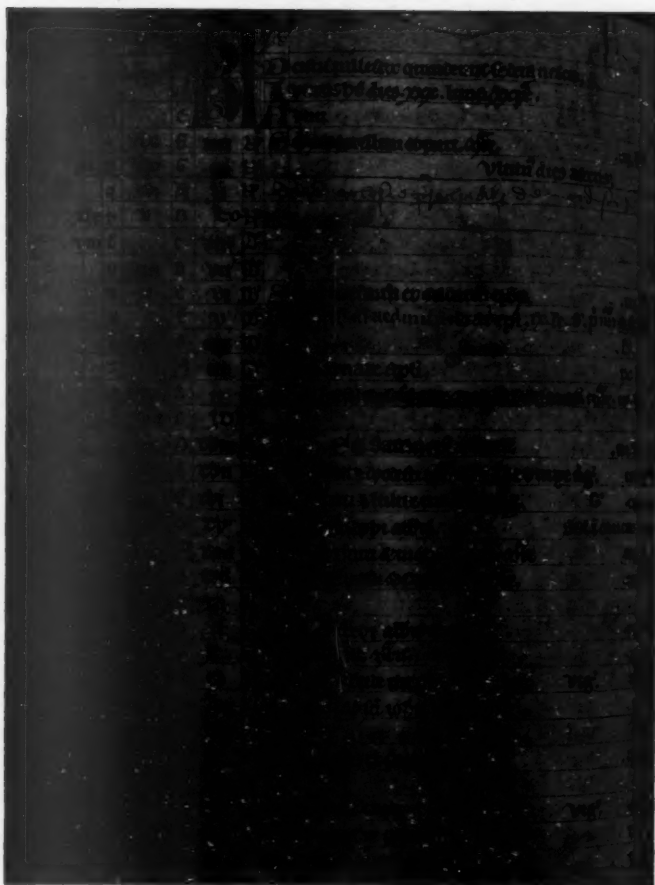


Fig. 4.—Hereford Cathedral. Page of MS.  
(J. Thirlwall, Hereford, photo.).

still exist, and testify to the true artistic mind of some of the writers. In many cases the margins of the pages are enriched with light flowing tracery and conventional foliage, encircling, at intervals, quaint figures of curious birds and animals. The

initials were frequently of the most ornate character, being finely gilded and painted. Long sprays of ivy often sprang from these richly illuminated letters and completely surrounded the leaves. These monastic heirlooms occupied the thoughts and attention



Fig. 5.—The Hereford Gospels "In Principio," Initial Page.  
Reproduced from F. T. Havergal's *Fasti Herefordenses*.

of the scribe and artist for many years before the volume was completed.

Some of the libraries which were founded by the Religious



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Orders yet remain, though the original number of books has been considerably augmented by later additions. Several of the present Cathedral libraries owe their origin to monastic times, and are rich in priceless manuscripts and age-worn volumes. Perhaps the best in existence is that of Durham, possessing many relics of conventual labour.

The fine collection of books in Hereford Cathedral affords an excellent example of a monastic library of Mediæval days. This valuable library was established in the year 1380 A.D., and now consists of more than two thousand volumes of printed matter and two hundred and thirty manuscripts. The books were originally placed above the west cloister, which was partially taken down in the sixteenth century, when they were transferred to the "Ladye Chapel," where they remained fully two hundred years, when they were seldom seen and their existence almost forgotten. Then the restorer visited the "Ladye Chapel," and they were again displaced, finding a temporary refuge in some disused apartments in the College. Later they were removed and stored in the muniment room over the north transept. But at last a brighter era dawned for these treasures of antiquity. Through the generous bequest of one of the late Canons a spacious chamber was built above the restored western cloister for their reception, where these ancient books are now deposited, the present dean having recently made them accessible to the public. As in bygone days, they are ranged upon the old oak shelves in their original bookcases, which are double and open. Five of these are still perfect, but the remaining two are incomplete, retaining only portions of the early woodwork. Each bookcase is between nine and ten feet long, being considerably more than seven feet high. The three strong boards forming the ends of the cases are quite two inches thick, but none of the shelves are so substantial; the wood forming the partitions is very rough and unplanned.

The volumes are placed on the shelves with their edges outwards: fifteen hundred of these are secured to the bookcase by iron chains long enough to admit of the volume being taken down and placed on one of the small oaken desks provided for the purpose when required for reading. Each book has its own separate chain, attached by a ring to the binding, while the other end of the chain is fastened to a bar which runs along the front of the shelf. The iron bars are firmly fixed and supplied with

a lock and key ; thus the chains cannot be slipped off the protecting rod without first being unlocked. In those days books were too precious and cost too much money and labour to produce

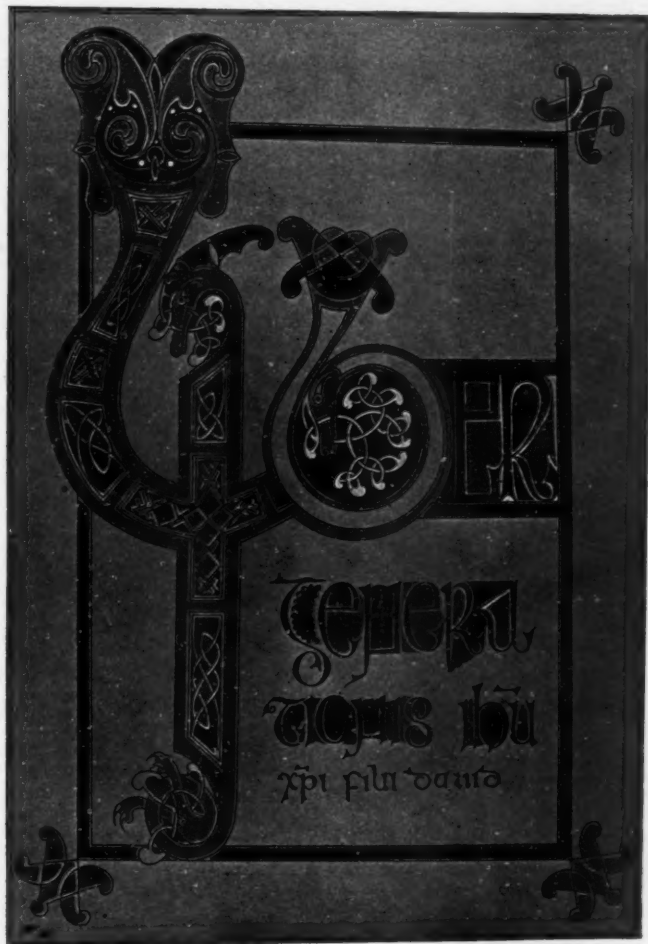


Fig. 6.—The Hereford Gospels "Liber Generationis," Initial Page.  
Reproduced from F. T. Havergal's *Fasti Herefordenses*.

to run any risk of their being stolen, so the "system of chaining" became almost universal in the Middle Ages, where there was any considerable amount of monastic archives.

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This remarkable library contains many rare books—most of the volumes are theological works. All the shelves of one large double case are entirely filled with costly manuscripts, many of them being beautifully illuminated, and are the elaborate handiwork of the monks, which must have taken the patient transcribers

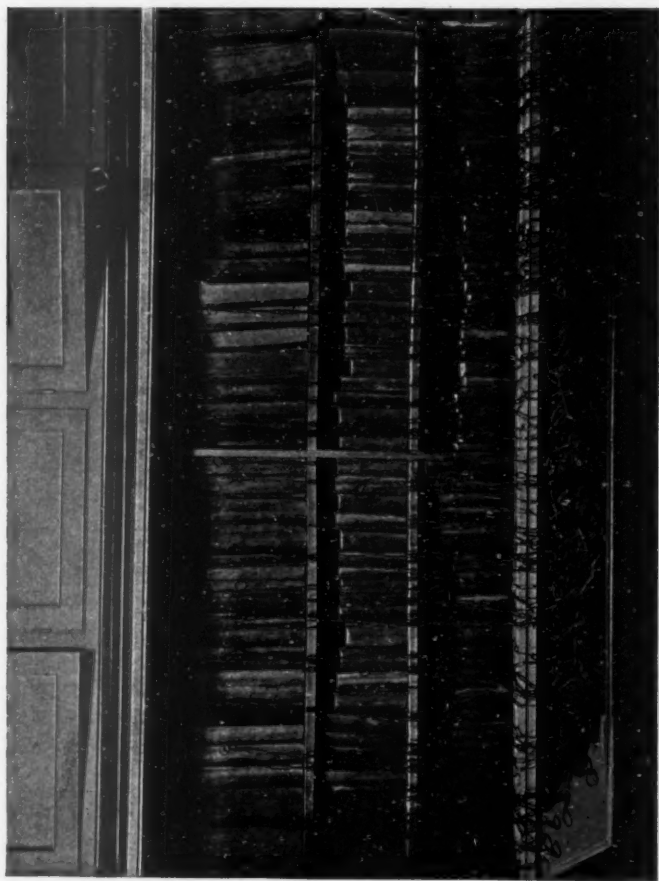


Fig. 7.—All Saints' Church, Hereford. Library of Chained Books.  
(J. Thirkwall, Hereford, photo.)

many years to complete. The most ancient MS. is a wonderful copy of the four Gospels in Latin, dating back to Saxon days, given by Athelstan, the last Saxon Bishop of the Diocese of Hereford. The name of the writer is unknown, but it is believed to have been transcribed by one or more of the Northumbrian

monks in the eighth or ninth century. All the letters are perfectly formed, the initials being enriched with the most delicately wrought decoration, including the wondrous knots and quaint animals invariably found in all true Anglian work. Every intricate detail in the design of each page is skilfully and marvellously executed. Another manuscript of intrinsic value is the Hereford Use dated 1215 A.D., which was lost for many years, but was at last found and rescued from a second-hand shop in Drury Lane, and restored to the Cathedral. The Preface to the Book of Common Prayer states that this "Hereford Use" was one of those that the compilers set aside when they introduced the more simple "single one . . . which now prevails in the Church of England." Its



Fig. 8.—Cumnor Church, Oxon. Chained Bible.  
(H. Giles, Oxford, photo.).

origin is unknown, but it was probably used, not only throughout the Diocese, but in most of the Churches in South Wales. These Service-books were specially singled out for destruction at the time of the Reformation as encouraging erroneous doctrine and practices, but this (with others) escaped the common fate of the missals and breviaries, having probably become obsolete in the fourteenth century, when it underwent revision, and this MS. was given to the adjacent parish of Mordiford, to which fact it owes its present existence. It has not been preserved intact, as a few leaves have been removed; the writing is excellently clear, reflecting great credit on the transcriber, but there is very little superfluous ornamentation: the initial letters are blue and red,

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the staves and rubrics in red alone. It may be said to contain two parts, the first relating chiefly to the Order of Services for the Sundays and great Festivals, the second portion to those appointed for the Minor Saints and other holy days, interspersed with Antiphons, hymns, and the musical arrangements for the various Services throughout the year. An imperfect Kalendar also registers the obits to be observed of all those who had been liberal benefactors to the Diocese. The "Use of Bangor" finds a place among other missals in this fine old library, which also includes a Wycliffe Bible and a highly prized Latin Bible combined with a Commentary, in five large volumes, bequeathed by Nicholas de Lyra in 1485 A.D., affording an excellent specimen of ancient binding, the covers being made of oak and embossed leather studded with brass, and still bearing the original clasps. There are also many early printed works, the most important being the first edition of the "Golden Legend," published by Caxton in 1483 A.D., retaining its old chain and binding, and is in admirable preservation. A most curious pen-and-ink drawing is pasted at the end of one book, which is believed to have been executed in the thirteenth century; this represents the Crucifixion of the Saviour, with figures of the Virgin Mary and St. John, the beloved disciple, standing on either side of the Cross. The treasures of early book-lore and MSS. placed on the shelves or laid within the glass cases under the safe custody of the Cathedral librarian are too numerous to name, but they are valued relics to all lovers of antiquity.

But it is not the Cathedral alone which can claim the proud distinction of possessing a chained library in this historic city, for in the vestry of All Saints' Church is preserved a large collection of rare books. These were left as a legacy "to the parish by William Brewster, M.D.," who died in 1715 A.D. Most of the volumes are securely fastened to the shelves by iron chains and rings, attached to a bar in a similar manner to those in the Cathedral. Many interesting works are ranged in rows in the bookcase, including a Roman Missal dating back to 1541 A.D., and a good example of the "Geneva Bible," 1599 A.D., which, by an error and the introduction of a wrong word in Genesis iii. 7, is now known throughout the world as the "Breeches Bible." The greater part of the library consists of theological works, some of which were published at the beginning of the eighteenth century, thus testifying to the lingering custom of safeguarding these relics of bygone ages in iron bonds until the Georgian era.



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Another interesting example of these fettered books occurs in Wimborne Minster, where the venerable cruciform church has been the chosen custodian of these ancient treasures for more than two centuries. Within the walls of the library, above the sacristy, is stored a large collection of old books and MSS. presented by the Rev. W. Stone in 1686 for the benefit of the parishioners, a gift which would be greatly appreciated in those days, when theological treatises were scarce and costly, and only came within the reach of the wealthy. Originally the library consisted of about 243 volumes; two hundred or more of these still remain, and stand, edge outwards, on the shelves, being secured by long iron chains fastened to the shelf above by iron rods. One of the most valuable is a time-worn MS. dating back to A.D. 1343; but other rare archives revealing and preserving the history of the past are also found amongst these hoary chain-bound relics of an age less cultured and civilized than the glorious Victorian era or the present enlightened twentieth century.

EMILY MASON.



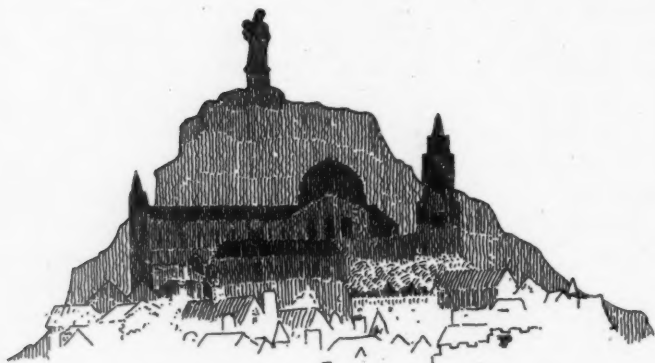


Fig. 1.—Le Puy en Velay. The Basilica.

## St. Michel d'Aiguilhe, Puy en Velay.

IN the days when the Empire was at peace the French authorities, to demonstrate it to the world, were not content with merely beating their swords into plough-shares, but cast their captured Russian cannon into gigantic votive images of the Blessed Virgin with which to disfigure the hilltops of their beautiful country. The volcanic peaks of Auvergne and Velay became pedestals for some of these monstrous creations; but though Le Puy is afflicted with one of them, its two principal heights were, fortunately, previously occupied in a more worthy manner. St. Michel, the angelic patron of all high places, had already claimed possession of the needle of basalt which pierces the sky above the city, and on the rock of Corneille, which soars still higher, an angel choir with oil from Paradise had already consecrated the "seraphic basilica"; so that when the iron colossus made its appearance it had to be content with a standing place at the back of the volcanic amphitheatre. Although, by its obtrusiveness, it demands the first notice of the visitor, it but momentarily diverts his attention from the natural and artistic beauties of the place; and there is consolation in the thought that the ironwork, if it does not speedily reach the scrap-heap, will inevitably fall a prey to the devouring rust.

Little is certainly known of the earliest history of Le Puy, except that it was not the original capital of the Vilavi, but only became so, under the name of Anicium, in the sixth century. It had, however, been a Roman settlement, of which considerable remains still exist; it became the capital when Bishop Erodus, locally known, says Professor Freeman, as Vozy, removed hither the Vilavian See, and founded the present Cathedral. The architect was one Scutarius, described as a Roman senator, and from the miraculous manner in which it was consecrated the Church acquired the descriptive title of "Angelic." The growth of this original fabric beyond the limits of the plateau on which it was first founded, till huge walls and sub-structures had, like another Solomon's Temple, to be raised from the lower levels to carry the extensions, do not just now particularly concern us; but some notice of its architectural history, as well as of the characteristics of the country in which Le Puy is situated, are necessary to a proper appreciation of the peculiarities of the Chapel of St. Michel d'Aiguilhe.

Like Auvergne, the County of Velay is of a marked volcanic origin, and is further distinguished by lofty isolated peaks of basalt left standing alone by the gradual erosion of the surrounding loose breccia, which present a striking and almost fantastic outline, some of them showing columnar formations like those of Staffa and the Giants' Causeway. Most of these heights have been crowned with buildings, such as the castles of Polignac and Espailly, or with churches, as are the two in Le Puy. The needle of St. Michel rises to a height of 265 feet, with precipitous sides round which and into which are cut the steps giving access to the top. The neighbouring rock of Corneille is much loftier and of larger extent, and on a shelf of it the Cathedral stands, while up the slopes of it rise the streets of the ancient city, quite inaccessible to carriages—much like the stepped *gradoni* of Naples. Of the earliest building of Erodus and Scutarius no visible remains exist, but some may be incorporated in the eastern parts of the present Cathedral, which seem to belong to the closing years of the tenth century. The western extension of the nave, which is carried on a large sub-structure raised from the lower levels of the rock, appears to have been completed in the twelfth century, and may be compared for its vast undercroft with the eastward extensions of the cathedrals of Bourges and Le Mans, which were erected over the ancient city fosses. A church thus situated necessarily has

not the usual arrangement of western entrances, but from the low level, through the basement, a flight of 135 steps lands the weary pilgrim within the south aisle of the Church; hence this peculiar entrance and the exits in the transepts are referred to in the saying that "in Notre Dame du Puy one entered by the navel and went out by the ears." The Romanesque cloisters to the north of the Cathedral are amongst the most perfect in France, and contain among the richly carved capitals some which may be ancient, though debased, Roman work. The peculiar position of the building prevented the erection of any western towers, but at the east end, and quite detached, rises one of a peculiar and elegant outline, erected perhaps in the twelfth century, about which there has been much discussion. Measured drawings of it have been published both by Viollet-le-Duc and G. E. Street, but neither architect seemed to have been aware, or he omitted to mention it, that his drawing was merely a reproduction of a nineteenth century restoration—how near to or how far from correct no one seems to know—of an ancient tower standing on the site, but destroyed in the Revolution. Nearly all the church towers, both in Velay and Auvergne, were thus destroyed, and these we now see were re-erected on their ruins in the last century. "Paralytic Couthon," says Carlyle in his *French Revolution*, "borne on a chair, taps on the wall with emblematic mallet saying: '*La Loi te frappe*—the Law strikes thee'; masons with wedge and crow-bar begin demolition, crash of downfall, dim ruin and dust-clouds fly in the winter wind."

The Chapel of St. Michel is in a quarter of the city some little distance from the Cathedral, which is called "of the Needle" from the lofty rock which dominates it. Immediately at the base of this are two interesting remains of mediæval art, as well as the ruined gateway and buildings of approach to the rock itself. The chief of these is an octagonal Romanesque building, locally known as the Temple of Diana, and once thought to have been a baptistery; but it seems more than probable that it was a chapel of the Knights Templars, who had an establishment here, and it may be compared both for plan and dimensions with a similar chapel of theirs at Laon, and perhaps with the one the foundations of which were discovered on the western heights at Dover. The other is a very beautiful wayside cross, possibly of the fourteenth century and restored, which bears on the one face a Crucifixion and on the other a Madonna and Child. Both of the buildings appear in our general view of the rock.

To win the plateau on which the Chapel stands some steep inclines and 223 uneven and winding steps have to be mounted,

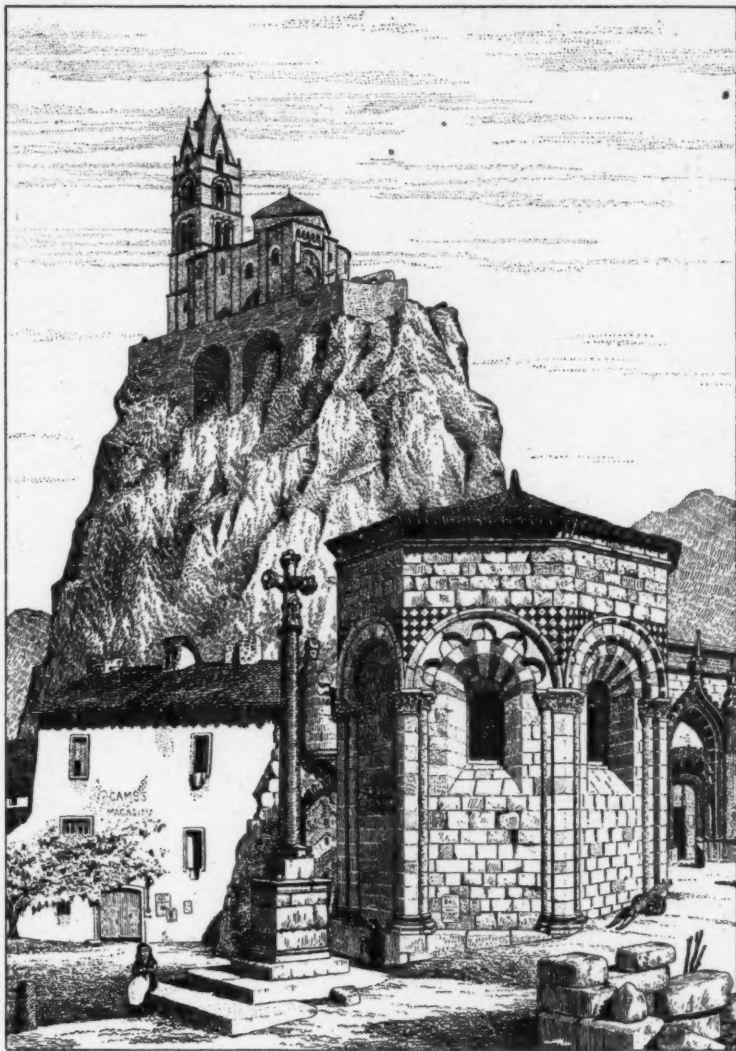


Fig. 2.—Le Puy en Velay. The Rock of the Needle.

giving time to reflect on the unreasonableness, not to say thoughtlessness, of an angel, who can, presumably, fly as easily as not



to a lower level, fixing his shrine on so inaccessible and tiresome an elevation; the summit gained, however, the superb view to be obtained from the terrace is sufficient reward for the toil, even without the architectural gem which has now to engage our attention.

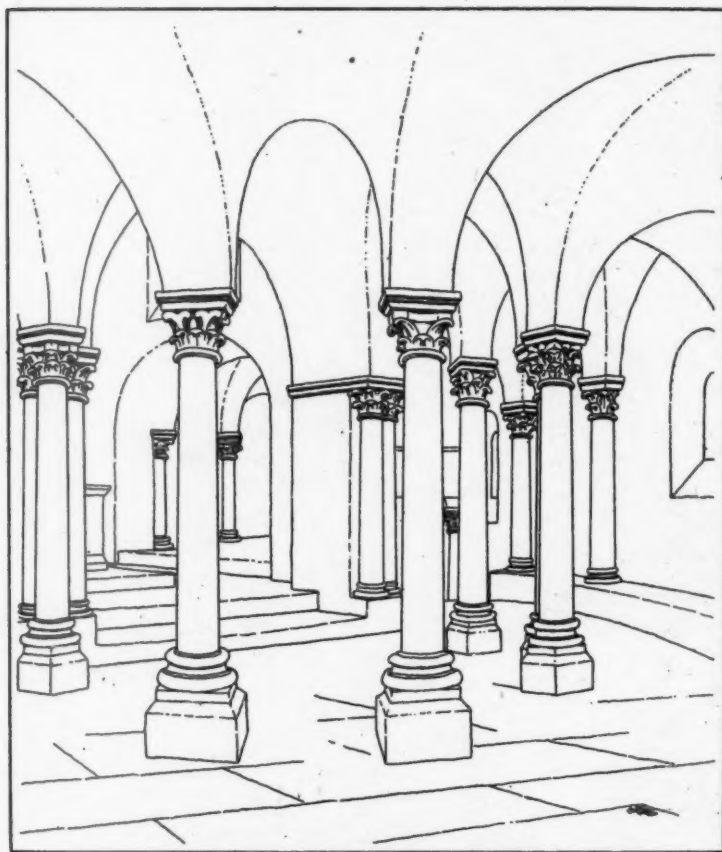


Fig. 3.—Le Puy en Velay. Interior view of the Chapel of St. Michel.

Entering from the terrace through a rich and peculiar portal, we pass up another flight of steps recalling, in this particular, the entrance to the Cathedral, and find ourselves in what might be the south aisle of an imperfectly shaped circular nave, with our faces towards the west end (fig. 3). The area is covered with a

roughly formed dome surrounded with a vaulted aisle, all in rough concrete rubble without any ribs or properly formed arches, but with the openings intersecting the vaults or each other quite at random. All of this is carried on pillars and wall-shafts which, including both capital and base, stand only 7 ft. 6 ins. high; indeed, the proportions throughout, as the rough sketch plan will show, are extremely diminutive, the greatest width across the nave and aisles being only 28 ft., and the depth from the chancel step to the western wall only 20 ft. (fig. 4). The building of the nave has been attributed to a bishop bearing the Teutonic name of Godescalc, in the latter half of the tenth century, but it seems more likely to belong to the eleventh, and, while showing in the

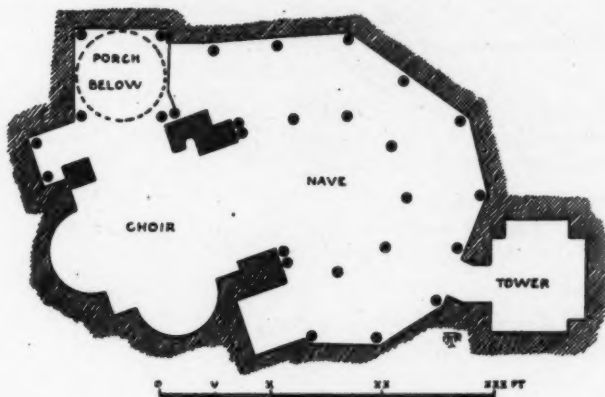


Fig. 4.—Le Puy en Velay. Plan of the Chapel of St. Michel.

entasis of the columns some local influence—if, indeed, they are not some older shafts re-used—seems more akin in the carving of the capitals and other details to the northern Romanesque than does the slightly earlier work of the Cathedral cloisters. The present bare roof was once decorated with paintings, of which considerable traces remain; but, in spite of its very exalted position, the windows being too few and too small to let in much light, the chapel must always have had more or less the aspect of a crypt. Unsymmetrically placed at the west end of the nave is a diminutive spire, although quite in proportion to the rest of the fabric, which reproduces many of the peculiarities of the Cathedral tower. How far it escaped the attentions of the

iconoclastic Coulhon seems to be uncertain; but although one may conceive it possible that some ardent revolutionaries might have borne him in his litter up these 223 steps to repeat his damnatory formula, one feels that the enthusiasm of the masons would have failed them in carrying out their task.

The oldest part of the Chapel is the little chancel, measuring only 13 ft. 6 ins. across, which was once itself, perhaps, the original chapel, not unlike many other isolated chapels to be found in France; such as, for instance, St. Croix at Montmajour by Arles. When perfect it consisted of a square building with three, or perhaps four, apses covered with semi-domes. There are now only two apses remaining—that to the south was removed when the present entrance was formed, and the west one, if it ever existed, when the nave was built. It is now covered with a square domical vault raised high enough for the insertion of small windows over the apses. In all probability this is a portion of the Church of which it is stated that the first stone was laid in 962, and which was completed by Guy II., Bishop of Le Puy, in 984. Over the main flight of steps leading up from the porch into the south aisle is a small chapel entered from the chancel by an opening, to make which the original southern apse was removed. This chapel is covered with a circular dome 8 ft. in diameter, resting on pendentives, and was once richly painted, and, although the colours are much faded, the figures of our Lord with angels and the Evangelists can be easily made out.

We have left until the last the description of the porch by which we entered the Church, and which, both for its iconography and its coloured decoration, is exceedingly interesting (fig. 5). It is constructed, like the rest of the building, mainly of volcanic tufa, with the moulded and carved work executed in a yellowish sandstone, the decorations are formed by narrow bands of brick between which are squares and chevrons of bluish-black stone from Denise, and grey stone of Blavaizy, arranged like tiles. The cloisters of the Cathedral are similarly decorated, and its style recalls the decorations executed on a much larger scale at Issoire, Notre Dame du Port, Clermont Ferrand, and other churches of Auvergne. The nook-shafts of the doorway, which show an entasis, have the necking and the fillet below worked on, and may be debased Roman work re-used from an older building. The iconography is simple: on a frieze of five panels above the doorway, in the centre one is a half-length figure of Our Lord in the act of

benediction, and to His left are the archangel, the patron saint of the Church, and St. Peter with the keys. The figures to the right are not so clearly defined, but may be St. Mary and St. John. On the cusps of the door arch are two figures supposed to be Adam and Eve, the latter embowered in foliage. Of the three foils of the arch the centre one has an Agnus Dei with the symbols of SS. Mark and Luke on either side, and the side foils have kneeling

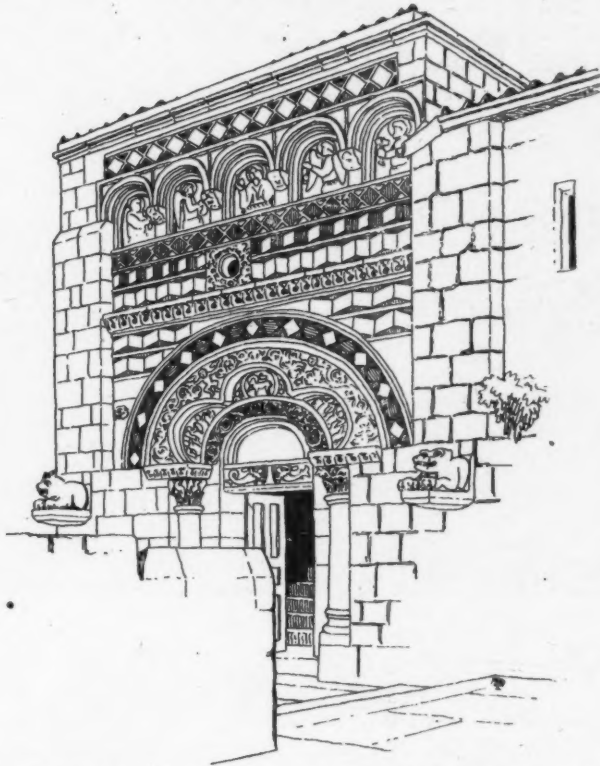


Fig. 5.—Le Puy en Velay. Exterior view of the Chapel of St. Michel.

figures bearing chalices; while on the capitals appear the remaining Evangelistic symbols for SS. Matthew and John. On each side of the porch are projecting half-monsters, which, perhaps, do duty for lions, and recall, in such a position, a common arrangement in the churches of Apulia. The tympanum over the doorway is now bare, but it may once have been filled in with mosaics, like that of the portal of St. Jean in the Cathedral.

188 *St. Michel d'Aiguilhe, Puy en Velay.*

Notes and drawings made by the author in Le Puy in 1868 form the foundation for this article, in the preparation of which he has also consulted the following authorities : *Voyage en Auvergne*, par Prosper Mérimée; "Churches of Le Puy-en-Velay and Auvergne," by George Edmund Street in the *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects*; *Sketches from French Travel*, by Edward A. Freeman; *Les Incrustations Decoratives*, etc., par Lucien Bégule, and others.

There is a legend about a lofty mountain in Ceylon, known as Adam's Peak, to the effect that once in a thousand years an angel descends from Heaven and, softly trailing the hem of its silken robe across the rock, abrades some infinitesimal portion of the granite, and it is said that until the mountain is thus quite worn away the world will endure. De Quincey, in commenting on the story, says, that if he were inclined to bet on the event he would back the rock against the tissue; and we may equally anticipate that the basalt of the Aiguilhe will endure as long as the world itself, unabraded by the protecting mantle of its archangel.

J. TAVENOR PERRY.





Notes on Archæology and Kindred Subjects.



Fig. 1.—Macduff's Castle, Wemyss, Fifeshire, N.B.

LONG-HIDDEN TREASURES ON THE EAST COAST OF FIFE.

THE antiquarian finds on the Fife coast in 1906 have been both interesting and numerous. The first that came into notice were found in the débris floor of Macduff Castle ruins, two prominent square towers on a height right above Jonathan's Cave, between East Wemyss and Buckhaven.

The Laird of Wemyss, it is said, contemplates the restoration of these ancient towers to suit modern requirements, and has employed a large squad of workmen to remove the accumulated débris of centuries from the interior of the western tower. In doing so, when four feet below the surface they came on the lower portion of an octagon quern; and again, at the depth of nine feet the coat of arms of the Colvilles was discovered embedded, face downwards, among fine yellow sand. Two coins were also found, one of the date of Henry IV. of France and

Navarre; the other was of the time of Charles II. The former coin



Fig. 2.—Macduff's Castle, Wemyss, Fifeshire, N.B.

is supposed to have some connection with the first Lord Colville of Culross,



Fig. 3.—Lower Stone of Pot Quern found at Macduff's Castle.

who attained distinction in the French wars under Henry of Navarre. The masonry already laid bare shows arched roofs and pointed windows. The walls are six feet thick, with embrasures to the north, west, and south.

The connection of the Colvilles and Wemysses is traced to the fact that Sir Michael Wemyss of Wemyss, the first

known Laird of Wemyss, died in 1342, without male issue, and that his

large possessions were sub-divided among his three daughters as co-heiresses, one of whom married a Livingstone, whose family



Fig. 4.—Arms of the Colvilles found at Macduff's Castle.



Fig. 5.—Site of Bronze Age Cemetery on top of Sussan Brae, near Denbeath, Fifeshire, N.B.

inherited the eastern portion of the estate, which included Macduff Castle, until 1530, when it became the property of the Colvilles of Ochiltree and, latterly, of Culross. John, the first Earl of



Fig. 6.—Incense Cup and Cinerary Urn found at Denbeath, Fifeshire, N.B.



Fig. 7.—Cinerary Urn found at Denbeath, Fifeshire, N.B.

Wemyss, however, purchased the property from the Colvilles in 1630, and took up residence in Macduff Castle to signalise the re-acquisition of the ancient stronghold of the Wemyss family. Thus is

accounted for the long-buried coat of arms which, it is conjectured, had been brought to Wemyss from Ochiltree when the Livingstones and the Colvilles exchanged estates in 1530, and accordingly it is assumed that the stone comes down to us linked with the Ochiltrees of a date near the close of the fourteenth century. While the débris was being removed it was anticipated that a local tradition might be confirmed, namely, that there is—or was—a subterranean connection between Macduff Castle and Jonathan's Cave, which contains a well of clear water. Indeed, during those troubled times this assumed connection would facilitate escape in time of need from the Castle to the sea-shore.

A still more startling discovery was made soon after this on the top of a wooded height locally known as "the Sussan Brae," standing about half-way between the Links of Buckhaven and Methil, and now named

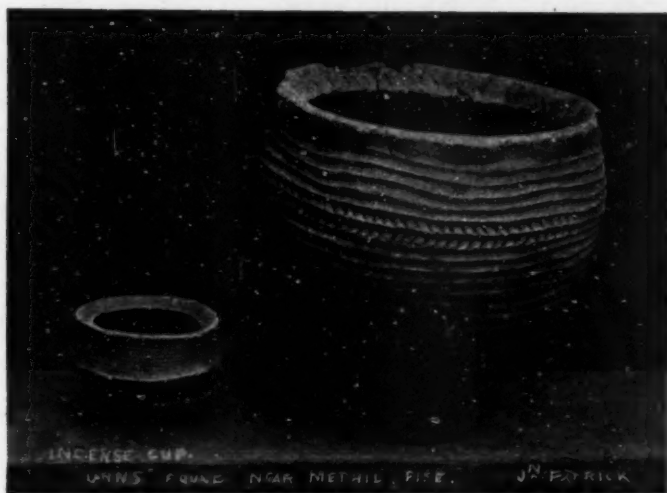


Fig. 8.—Incense Cup and Cinerary Urn found at Denbeath, Fifeshire, N.B.

Denbeath from its proximity to a recently erected colliery village. On the eastern top of the height a very ancient cemetery had existed, above a dozen cists were found composed of long slabs of sandstone, which formed the sides and ends of graves in which were found urns of brown earthen ware, probably baked by sun heat. One large urn was partially filled with human remains, not too well incinerated, as many pieces of bone about the size of a penny lay among the grey ashes. The ornamentation of an inverted urn was very primitive-looking, yet the design on one of the smaller urns, evidently an incense cup, though, unfortunately, broken during removal, gives us a clue to the probable time and people who buried their dead here. The design is the usual V-shaped cutting in vogue in the Bronze Age rather than in the early Iron Age, as the same ornament may be seen on an urn of the incense type illustrated on page 24 in *Celtic Art in Pagan and Christian Times*, by J. Romilly Allen, F.S.A.

JOHN PATRICK.



THE "PILGRIMS' CHURCH" AT LLANFIHANGEL  
ABERCOWIN, CARMARTHENSHIRE.

FAR from any frequented road, in the midst of marshy meadows subject to inundations from the rivers Tawe and Cowin, in County Carmarthen, stand the remains of a sanctuary, whose ruined walls rise from a dank overgrowth of grass, which, despite their forlorn condition, are of monumental interest as having been a "Pilgrims' Church." They recall a period in history when peregrinations for religion's sake were alike familiar to Celt and Saxon.

Llanfihangel Abercowin—the Church of the Angel—gains the first name in reference to its dedication to St. Michael; whilst the second is derived from its position in relation to the river Cowin.



Fig. 1.—The Pilgrims' Church at Llanfihangel Abercowin, Carmarthenshire.

The origin of this church—a parish church until 1848—and the appellation of the "Pilgrims' Church" is shrouded in that veil which tantalises historians and begets conjectures, oft-times of the wildest description. Its dedication to St. Michael is one evidence of great antiquity; but the earliest visible witness of its age is seen in the Norman details of the ruin.

The church consists of a massive western tower opening by a good Norman arch into the nave; above this arch is a doorway such as was built in disturbed districts as a refuge not easily attainable by an enemy. The nave, 36 feet long and 18 feet wide, is divided by another Norman arch from the chancel, which is about 20 feet long and 15 feet wide, inside measurements.

Fragments of the internal fittings which remain consist of a simple stone bracket on either side of the altar site against the east wall, and two niches at the angles of the walls. An aumbry is in the south wall of the chancel, and two stoups for holy water, one in the south wall of the tower, and the other—fractured—within the south door of the nave. The remains of broken steps in the north wall of the nave point to a stairway in the thickness of that wall, said to have communicated with the tower; but the greater part of this side has fallen in and the steps cannot be traced.

The tradition that it was a "Pilgrims' Church" leads the thoughts to a time when, in a very early age, great numbers of Irishmen made the arduous voyage to the Holy Land to worship at the Holy Sepulchre and adore the Holy Cross, which had not then fallen into the hands of the heathen Persians, and to visit the scenes of our Lord's sojourn on earth.

Returning to their homes, many of these Celtic pilgrims passed across part of this island before it formed any portion of Saxon England, across Little Wales and Wales—that is, the present counties of Cornwall, Devon, with part of Somerset, and Wales as we know it to-day.

This part of the journey was arranged that the pilgrims might visit the holy ground of Glastonbury, the "Second Rome," as it was called; and also the shrine of St. David on the other side of the Severn Sea. That the journey was fraught with peril is evident by the death of St. Indract and his companions, who had not left Glastonbury far behind when they were murdered for the bright ferrules of their pilgrims' staves, which the robbers mistook for gold.

From Somerset the pilgrims would land at Kidwelly, cross Llanstephan Ferry, and rest at the house of the community established at Llanfihangel for the succour of such travellers, before proceeding to St. David's.

Within the churchyard are five rudely sculptured gravestones, known as the "Pilgrims' Graves." One local tradition founds the origin of



Fig. 2.—Pilgrim's Grave at Llanfihangel Abercowin.

the church on these graves. They are said to be the sepulchres of certain holy palmers who wandered thither in poverty and distress, and, about to perish for want, slew each other, the last survivor burying himself in one of the graves which they had prepared, and, pulling the stone over him, left it ill-adjusted in an oblique position. It is needless to point out the utter fabulousness of this unchristian legend; the stones date from about the early part of the fifteenth century, and were probably placed over the bodies of holy travellers who died at this wayside refuge on their return from sacred spots in far distant countries.

Three of these gravestones, contiguous to each other near the south wall of the chancel, are here illustrated. In the summer of 1838 the central grave was opened. At the depth of 4 feet a sort of cist was found, composed of six detached slabs of stone, in which were several small bones, apparently those of a youth, and half a dozen scallop shells about

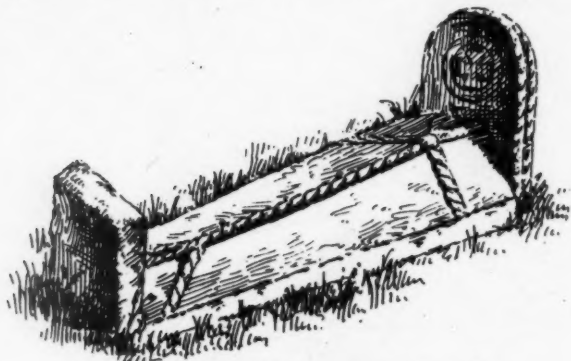


Fig. 3.—Pilgrim's Grave at Llanfihangel Abercowin.

the size of the palm of the hand, such as were worn on the hats and garments of pilgrims. These shells were first distinctive of pilgrims to St. James of Compostella, but afterwards were used as a general badge of pilgrimage.

The sanctity of the pilgrims who were here laid to rest was said to keep the neighbourhood free from serpents, toads, or venomous reptiles, so long as the graves were reverently treated, and the soundness of this tradition has been verified, though from natural causes.

When a new parish church was built in 1848 the venerable fabric of St. Michael's was neglected, even worse, it was desecrated. The roof was carried away for the sake of the timber, gravestones were utilized for the paving of farm buildings, and the Norman font was ruthlessly thrown outside the hallowed walls. The fences of the churchyard were broken through, and cattle and swine were turned into it to browse and to grub, and the pilgrims' graves were desecrated. Then did the traditional

prophecy recur to the minds of the inhabitants; for the first time within memory the place became infested with vipers and other reptiles to such an extent that it was dangerous for human beings, and the very brutes avoided the plague-stricken spot. It was also said that those who had appropriated certain of the stones were visited by the serpents.

At this extremity another vicar, the Rev. W. Davies, was appointed. He set to work to cleanse the ruins of the sanctuary with an energy which

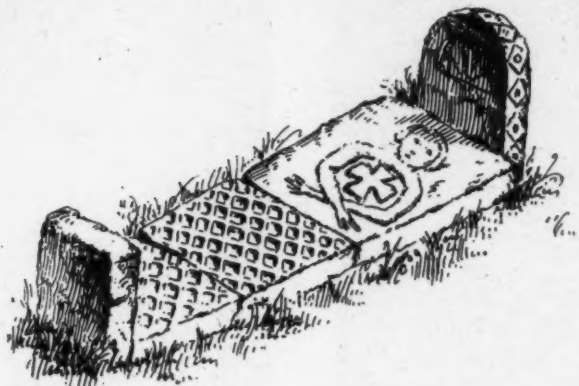


Fig. 4.—Pilgrim's Grave at Llanfihangel Abercowin.

surprised the parishioners, and that surprise developed into hostility when he demanded the return of the alienated stones to God's Acre, and closed the precincts to the inroads of the cattle.

With this renewed reverence the reptiles were exorcised, and again—once a year—are the sounds of praise and prayer heard to arise 'mid the ruined walls and the pilgrims' graves.

J. CHARLES WALL.

#### PRE-NORMAN CROSS-SHAFT RECENTLY FOUND AT NEWENT, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

WE are indebted to Mr. Edward Conder, Junr., F.S.A., The Conigree, Newent, Gloucestershire, for the account here given of an Anglo-Saxon cross-shaft lately discovered in the churchyard at Newent, a town eight miles north-west of Gloucester, near the borders of Worcestershire and Herefordshire. The photographs were taken by Mr. R. H. Bisco, of Newent. For many years past the stone has been buried with the exception of the upper tenon, which projected above the turf of the churchyard, and was thought to mark the spot where the tower of the church fell in 1673.

The total height of the shaft, including the tenons at the top and bottom, is 4 ft. 9 ins.; the greatest width is 1 ft. 5 ins., and the greatest

thickness is 10 ins.; the sculptured panels are 2 ft. 8 ins. high. The shaft is of very coarse and hard grey sandstone.

The figure subjects sculptured on the two broad faces appear to be (1) the Temptation of Adam and Eve; and (2) the Sacrifice of Isaac.



Fig. 1.—Pre-Norman Cross-Shaft at Newent.  
Temptation of Adam and Eve.



Fig. 2.—Pre-Norman Cross-Shaft at Newent.  
Sacrifice of Isaac.

On one of the narrow faces is David decapitating Goliath,\* and on the other a conventional beast at the top and below two dragons (?) much defaced. There is a horizontal band of sculpture just below the upper tenon, but the figures are too much weathered to be capable of interpretation.



The pre-Norman crosses of Great Britain may be divided primarily into two classes, namely (1) those in which the sculpture is purely decorative, and (2) those in which Scriptural figure subjects predominate.



Fig. 3.—Pre-Norman Cross-Shaft at Newent. Decapitation of Goliath.



Fig. 4.—Pre-Norman Cross-Shaft at Newent. Zoömpbic Designs.

The high crosses of Ireland belong chiefly to the second class, whilst those of England and Wales are mostly of the first class. The cross-shafts at Sandbach, Cheshire; Aycliffe, Co. Durham; Bewcastle,

Cumberland; Ruthwell, Dumfriesshire; and Newent, are exceptional in exhibiting Scriptural figure subjects—to a great extent to the exclusion of mere ornament.

The Temptation of Adam and Eve and the Sacrifice of Isaac occur very frequently on the Irish crosses, but the decapitation of Goliath is unknown; the nearest representation to that on the Newent cross-shaft is on the "Beatus Vir" initial page of the Boulogne Psalter,<sup>1</sup> where David is shown carrying Goliath's head to Saul. Goliath is portrayed as a huge Scot in a kilt and a Glengarry bonnet. On the Newent cross-shaft the staff of Goliath's spear, "like a weaver's beam" (1 Samuel xvii. 7) is clearly indicated. The shape of the hilt of Goliath's sword, which is being used by David for the decapitation, is of peculiar shape, and does not correspond with that of the sword-hilt of the Viking period. I understand that the Right Rev. G. F. Browne, Bishop of Bristol, intends to contribute a paper on the Newent cross-shaft to the *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society*, to which we shall look forward with interest.

The indication of the eyes of the figures by means of drilled holes is to be noted, as probably being an indication of early date. The conventional beast on one of the narrow faces of the shaft is not unlike some of those on the cross-shafts at Ilkley, in Yorkshire. There are so few examples of pre-Norman sculpture in Gloucestershire that it is hardly possible to classify them, but the Newent cross-shaft seems to belong to the Mercian group rather than to the Wessex type. The date is possibly A.D. 750 to 850.

J. ROMILLY ALLEN.

#### THE GREAT ORMSIDE BOWL.

ONE of the most valuable treasures in the York Museum is the Anglian metal bowl from Great Ormside, Westmoreland. Dr. G. A. Auden has kindly supplied us with the beautiful photographs of the bowl here reproduced. An interesting paper on the subject by Mr. W. G. Collingwood, F.S.A., will be found in *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmoreland Antiquarian Society* (vol. 15, p. 381).

Great Ormside is situated on the west side of the valley of the River Eden, three miles south of Appleby, Westmoreland. The bowl was found in Great Ormside churchyard early in the nineteenth century at a date and under circumstances now unknown; it was presented to the York Museum in 1823 by Mr. John Bland, of Ormside Lodge.

The bowl is 5½ ins. in diameter and 2 ins. deep; it is formed of two thin plates of metal, both gilt; the inside plate is of copper with a smooth surface, and the outside plate is of silver decorated with repoussé ornament. The bowl has at some period been clumsily repaired at the bottom with an annular metal plate, riveted on and holding the inner and outer portions of the bowl together.

<sup>1</sup> J. O. Westwood's *Miniatures*, pl. 38.

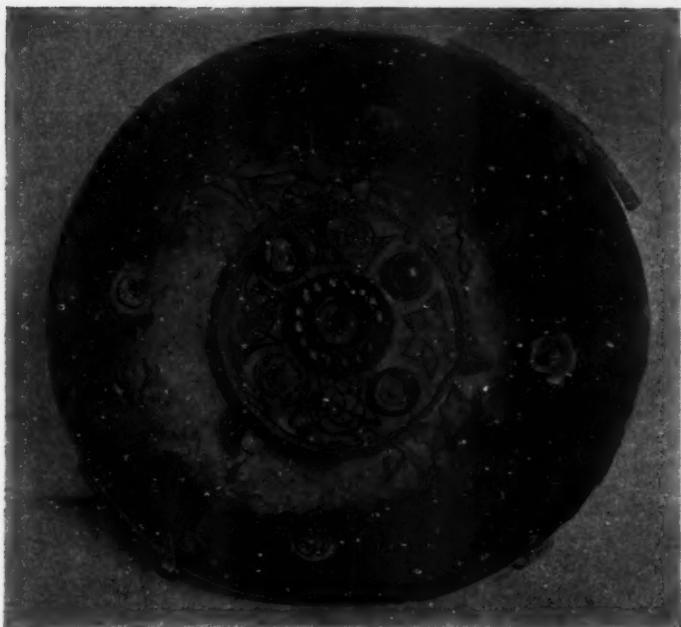


Fig. 1.—The Great Ormside Bowl. Interior view showing ornament on bottom.



Fig. 2.—The Great Ormside Bowl. Exterior view showing ornament on bottom.

The inner and outer skins were originally held together (1) at the top by a rim formed of a split metal tube, and fastened by five rivets concealed by oblong settings; (2) in the middle of the sides by four rivets; and (3) at the bottom by five rivets, the heads of the rivets being in all cases concealed by circular raised bosses.

The decorative features are as follows:—

*Inside of the Bowl.*—On the plain part of the concave sides of the bowl are four circular settings concealing the rivets, by which the inside and



Fig. 3.—The Great Ormside Bowl. Exterior view showing ornament on sides.



Fig. 4.—The Great Ormside Bowl. Exterior view showing ornament on sides.

outside skins are fixed together. On the flat part at the bottom of the bowl are four circular ornamental settings arranged symmetrically round a central setting of the same shape, all concealing the constructive rivets for holding the two portions of the bowl together. The central setting is surrounded by sixteen smaller settings. The flat part at the bottom is circular in shape, and separated from the smooth hollow sides by a moulding of plaited wire. The four spandrils between the settings are ornamented with interlaced patterns executed in filigree wire-work; the settings are surrounded by a narrow band of plaited wire.

*Outside of the Bowl.*—The whole of the design, including the cross of interlaced work at the bottom, is executed in repoussé work. Round the rim at the top is a row of pellets between two cable mouldings, and at irregular intervals occur the five rectangular settings which conceal the constructional rivet-heads. The convex sides of the bowl are divided into four panels—one between each of the circular raised bosses by which the constructional rivet-heads are concealed. The circular bosses are surrounded by decorative plaited mouldings. The four panels

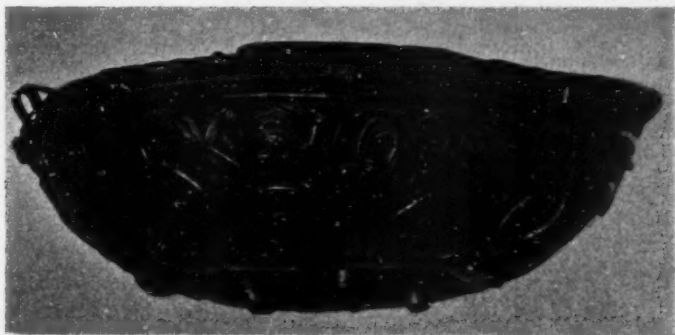


Fig. 5.—The Great Ormside Bowl. Exterior view showing ornament on sides.

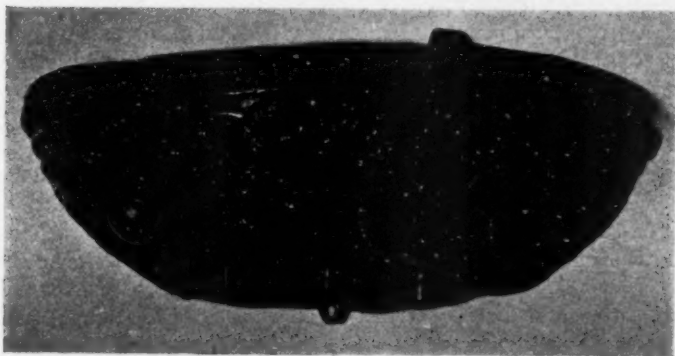


Fig. 6.—The Great Ormside Bowl. Exterior view showing ornament on sides.

round the convex sides of the bowl are filled in with conventional foliage, branching out symmetrically on each side from a central vertical stem and having beasts and birds involved in the scrolls. The birds and beasts are represented as pecking at the leaves and fruit. On the bottom of the bowl are four circular raised bosses arranged symmetrically round a central boss, and all concealing the constructional rivet-heads; the background of the bosses, which forms an equal-armed cross with expanded ends to the arms, is ornamented with a continuous piece of interlaced work.



Mr. W. G. Collingwood expresses his opinion that the Great Ormside Bowl "must have been partly made by a Greek artist in England," possibly about the same time as the Bewcastle cross, namely, about A.D. 670. However, we see nothing to indicate that the workmanship of the bowl is not altogether Anglian; the style of the vine scrolls and the birds pecking at the bunches of grapes corresponds very nearly with similar designs sculptured on the early Christian monuments of Northumbria.

#### PRE-NORMAN CROSS-SHAFT AT SHEFFIELD.

DISCOVERIES of interesting antiquities in novel positions have frequently been made in various parts of Britain, the spirit of vandalism following upon diverted religious fervour often leading to the destruction or dethronement of religious emblems. This was notably so in the case of crosses, many of these, of great antiquity even at the time of the Reformation, being broken up or placed out of sight so as not to offend the tender susceptibilities of those who had been enlightened by a new aspect of faith and symbolism, and were, therefore, eager to annihilate all aggressive reminders of the former misconceptions. Many of our ancient crosses were destroyed beyond recognition under this fervid influence, while others, taken from their positions, were hidden and their symbolic meaning obliterated by working them into the actual masonry of later structures, or by utilising them in other ways. By this latter means, however, important and beautiful examples have been well preserved, and in later days, when a broader and more general spirit of culture prevailed, they have been brought to light and accorded the due amount of attention their importance demanded. In the case of the cross-shaft which forms the subject of this note its adaptation to material service was singular in its special relation to the industries of Sheffield, where it was found.

The earliest direct mention of it that I can trace is in *Cruciana* by John Holland, published in 1835, where he speaks of it as having been "scooped or hollowed out and made into a blacksmith's trough." On a label attached to a cast of this cross in the Sheffield Public Museum it is stated: "The original was used as a hardening trough in a cutler's shop." This, I think, may be accepted as a correct statement of the use to which the cross was put, its rescue from these manufacturing purposes having been due to the purchase of the estate on which it was placed by a private individual early in the last century. Since that time it has been carefully treasured by his descendants, and, though exposed to the weather, it continues in a condition of excellent preservation, beyond the damage done to one side of it in converting it into a hardening trough. By kind permission of the present owner I have been allowed to make photographs from the original cross, which are

here reproduced, and though the actual cross, being private property, is not available for public inspection, there is an excellent cast of it in the Sheffield Public Museum at all times accessible for examination.

The cross is evidently of pre-Norman origin judging by its ornamentation, which in general character bears a close resemblance to the crosses

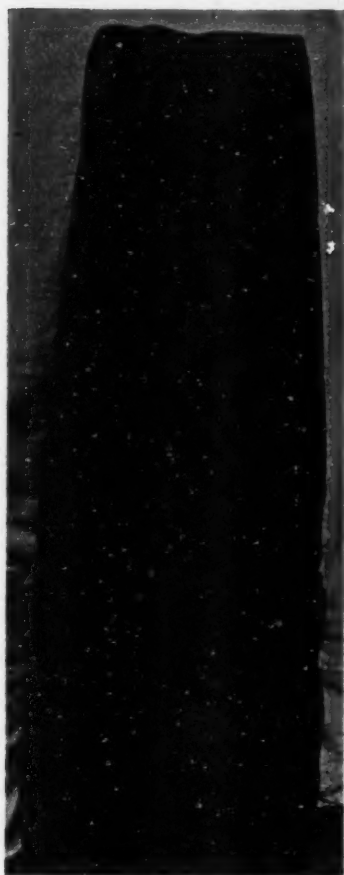


Fig. 1.—Pre-Norman Cross-Shaft at Sheffield. Front.



Fig. 2.—Pre-Norman Cross-Shaft at Sheffield. Right side.

at Eyam and Bakewell, figured in *THE RELIQUARY*, vol. x. (N. S.), pp. 194-204. It is of close-grained, hard, dark grey sandstone, such as is found in the carboniferous rocks in the neighbourhood of Sheffield. Three of the carved sides still remain almost intact, the other having

been cut away to hollow the shaft into a trough. It is 4 ft. 11 ins. high, 9 ins. of this being plain at the bottom, where the width is 1 ft. 9 ins., diminishing to 1 ft. 5 ins. at the top. The inside measure (of the trough) is 4 ft. 6 ins. high by 1 ft. wide. In *Sepulchral Slabs and Crosses of the*

*Middle Ages*, by E. L. Cutts, published in 1849, he speaks of it as "a curious stone coffin which has been formed out of the lower part of a Saxon Standard Cross, the remaining sides of which are decorated with elegant scroll work." The above dimensions prove that it could not have been used as a coffin, and Mr. Cutts was obviously unacquainted with the actual object.

The quality of the carving on the cross caused me at first to assume that it might belong to a later period than Saxon times, the comparatively well-modelled figure of the archer being considerably in advance of the archaic type of figure devoid of natural anatomy seen on so many of the pre-Norman crosses in England; but, on comparing it with illustrations of the crosses at Ad-



Fig. 3.—Pre-Norman Cross-Shaft at Sheffield. Front and right side. From the cast in the Weston Park Museum.

dington, Bewcastle, Irton, Lancaster, Eyam, Bakewell, and other places, I was compelled to admit that it was of Saxon age, executed by an artist of rather unusual ability.

On the front of the cross is the figure of an archer, kneeling, with

two series of concentric scrolls in front of him ; these scrolls are connected by broader stems, one running from the head of the man and opening out into a wide-mouthed volute with three conventional leaves projecting from a central strand, while the other two run into the upper and lower circles, to the inner terminals of which are attached bunches of grapes. Behind the legs of the man is part of another series of concentric circles with the stem fluted, as is the case with parts of the other stems—obviously a vine, the well recognised symbol of Christ. The man is clothed in a thick jacket, wears no shoes, though his limbs may be covered with leather garments fitting tightly. The whole of the work is deeply cut, and though the man is not altogether perfect in his modelling, he is sculptured with more skill than on most crosses of the same period. The right side of the cross-shaft is carved with a series of four circles divided by expanded volutes, fluted at their openings and with solid leaves between them, the inside of each circle having a cluster of seven bosses or fruit, the



Fig. 4.—Pre-Norman Cross-Shaft at Sheffield.  
Front and left side. From the cast in  
the Weston Park Museum.

whole of the circles flowing in a regular pattern from top to bottom. . On the left side, which it was not possible to photograph full face, the ornament is varied, the lower part consisting of knot-work in four distinct horizontal bands, then two similar double bands upright,

and above these are circles with volutes. At each corner is a thick rounded band running from top to bottom, beautifully even and deeply cut. Part of this moulding is broken off on the left side, probably when the shaft was scooped out; all the cutting is deep and strikingly regular, the arrangement and flow of the lines being quite artistic.



Fig. 5.—Pre-Norman Cross-Shaft  
at St. Andrew's, Bishop  
Auckland, Co. Durham.

Of the early history of the cross I cannot speak with any degree of certainty, for I can find no distinct reference to it in its original position. In Hunter's *Hallamshire* there are three old Sheffield crosses figured, none having any resemblance to the one under notice, and belonging to a much later period; but in some accounts connected with the Sheffield Parish Church given in the same book are included two items relating to a cross in the Churchyard. They are dated January 23rd, 1570—"Itm solde to George Tynker the cross stones XIIId"; "Itm paid for pullinge downe the cross in the Chirch yearde, IIIId."

It is quite possible that the cross there mentioned is the one here illustrated, for it is not unreasonable to suppose that George Tynker, who purchased the cross stones for twelve pence, may have found a profitable customer in a cutler who recognised the feasibility of making use of it in the trade which made Sheffield world famous.

An illustration of the cross-shaft, with an archer and foliage upon it, at St. Andrew's, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham, is given for comparison.

E. HOWARTH.

Sheffield Public Museum.





## Notices of New Publications.

"MEMORIALS OF OLD WILTSHIRE," edited by ALICE DRYDEN (Bemrose and Sons Ltd.), contains several articles of interest to the antiquary. In dealing with a county which teems with ancient remains of all kinds, it could hardly be otherwise, and the difficulty of the editor must have been to know what subjects to exclude rather than what to include in the volume. It goes without saying that Miss Dryden has been fortunate in securing capable specialists to treat of each subject. Glancing through the index to illustrations at the beginning of the book the reviewer's eye catches such titles as Stonehenge, Avebury, Longleat, Wilton House, Lacock Abbey, Malmesbury Abbey, Salisbury Cathedral, General Pitt-Rivers, etc., any one of which alone are enough to whet the appetite of the reader. The memoir of General Pitt-Rivers by his late assistant, Mr. H. St. George Gray, is by no means the least attractive essay in the book, and again calls attention to how great a loss the nation sustained by his death, and how everlasting is the disgrace attaching to successive British Governments for the attitude they have seen fit to take up with regard to the Ancient Monuments Act and the first Inspector appointed under it. Fortunately, the owners of ancient monuments such as Stonehenge are more enlightened than the Government, otherwise there is nothing whatever to prevent a landed proprietor from sweeping away every trace of prehistoric and other remains from the face of his estate. With regard to Stonehenge, its owner, Sir Edmund Antrobus, has done everything in his power to arrest the decay of the monument after the fall of some of the stones on the last day of December, 1900. The repairs rendered necessary in consequence of this unfortunate accident are illustrated by several photographic plates, and the process of setting up the fallen monoliths is described by Sir Alexander Muir Mackenzie. The Bishop of Bristol finds a congenial theme for an interesting chapter on "The pre-Norman Sculptured Stones in Wiltshire," several of which are now illustrated for the first time. The Right Rev. G. F. Browne has an ingenious theory connecting the fragments of Saxon crosses now existing at different places in Wilts. with "the Biscopstanes," which William of Malmesbury tells us were set up along the route taken by the body of St. Aldhelm from Doullting to Malmesbury. Miss Alice Dryden in her chapter on Bradford-on-Avon accepts a tenth century date for the little Saxon church there, although we should feel inclined to place it much earlier.

"*IGHTHAM, THE STORY OF A KENTISH VILLAGE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS*," by F. J. BENNETT, F.G.S. (the Homeland Association, Ltd.), deals with a district which is more or less of a paradise for the geologist and archaeologist. The portrait of Mr. Benjamin Harrison, who has exploited the prehistoric antiquities of Ightham to such good purpose, forms an appropriate frontispiece to this attractive volume. The results of Mr. Harrison's explorations in the neighbourhood are to be seen in the very fine collection of Palæolithic and Neolithic implements made by him, and now exhibited in the Maidstone Museum. Several plates are devoted to selected specimens from his collection, including even a series of those weird flint back-scratchers called Eoliths, which delight the simple souls of some of our more facetious museum curators. The chief attractions of Ightham to the antiquary are the Neolithic camp on Oldbury Hill and the Mote; both of these might with advantage have been illustrated by means of ground plans. By the way, why will the Ordnance surveyors persist in calling the Oldbury camp Roman, and why is the error repeated in the map which accompanies this volume? Two photographic views within the area of Oldbury camp by Mr. J. R. Larkby are specially deserving of praise. The Megalithic remains at Coldrum, Addington Park, and Kit's Coty House come in for their fair share of notice. Altogether, this is a most attractive book about a most attractive neighbourhood. There are few places within comparatively easy distance of London that are better worth visiting and thoroughly exploring on a long summer's day than Ightham, where the Eoliths come from.

"*ESSAYS UPON THE HISTORY OF MEAUX ABBEY*," by the Rev. A. EARLE, M.A. (A. Brown & Sons, Publishers). This useful little book of some two hundred pages is based upon a consideration of the well-known Latin Chronicles of Meaux, and deals chiefly with certain principles of mediæval land tenure. The first part gives a pleasantly-written summary of the Chronicles which were published some years ago in the Record Office series. Those who have not sufficient knowledge or patience to study the original, will find the account of the life and works of these monks set forth after a reliable fashion. The chapter that deals with the incidents of the Great Plague of 1349, brings vividly before us the awful severity of that terrible visitation usually known as the Black Death. Mr. Earle's estimate that three or four out of every five persons perished in this fearful plague out of the whole population of Holderness, seems to us to err on the side of exaggeration; it would have been safer to say a full half. The plague reached this part of Yorkshire in August, 1349. It had been raging in the West of England for several months, and the monks of Meaux considered that they had received a solemn warning of its approach in the early spring. On the Friday before Passion Sunday, when the

convent was assembled for evensong, and the verse of the Magnificat, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats," had just been reached, suddenly there was felt a great movement of the earth, which in an instant became so violent as to hurl the monks from their stalls, and they, being thrown on to the ground, lay there prostrate in great fear. When the plague reached this Abbey, early in August, there were forty-two monks and seven lay brothers. During that single month twenty-two of the monks and all but one of the lay brothers were dead. When the plague ceased only ten monks were left alive. As a natural result, the monastic property was in utter confusion, "the greater part of the tenants were dead, rents were not paid, crops lay rotted on the ground, stock had perished, for there had been no one to gather in the harvest, no one to feed the animals, the future was gloomy, no one remained to begin the autumn ploughing."

These pages are obviously written by one who is well informed in ecclesiastical history, but it would have been much better had the writer given references to authorities for the various statements that he makes outside the limits of the well-known *Chronicles of Meaux*. There is not a single footnote or other reference given from beginning to end of this little volume; nor is there any index. A few printer's slips have been overlooked, such as the statement that the great Plague came to Holderness in August, 1849.

"*A HISTORY OF SUFFOLK*," by DR. J. J. RAVEN. "*A HISTORY OF OXFORDSHIRE*," by J. MEADE FALKNER (Elliot Stock). We are glad to give just a word of welcome to the second and cheaper editions of these two issues of Mr. Elliot Stock's Popular County Histories. Both of them were noticed at the time of their first publication, and are full of accurate information concerning the counties of which they treat.

"*SURVEY OF YORK*," by GEORGE A. AUDEN, M.A., M.D. (Simpkin, Marshall & Co.). This is a book which demands but short notice, although it is of real value and was well worth bringing out in its present handy form. It was prepared for the meeting of the British Association at York, in 1906, and forms an historical and scientific survey of the city and district of a most comprehensive character. It is the work of a number of specialists, carefully edited and well arranged by that well-known antiquary, Dr. Auden, who contributes the opening section on "Prehistoric Archaeology." The chapters on the Minster and Churches of York and on its various monastic establishments are admirable summaries. Those who take an interest in the various branches of Natural History will find reliable sections for their guidance. Taken as a whole, this book of nearly 400 pages may be accepted as superseding the whole of the large number of guides and small histories of the City of York which have hitherto been issued.

"MEMORIALS OF OLD SHROPSHIRE," edited by THOMAS AUDEN, M.A., F.S.A. (Bemrose & Sons, Ltd.). Mr. Auden gained well-deserved repute by his recent book of the "Old Towns Series" on Shrewsbury, and he will certainly gain further credit by the 300 pages of the book now under brief consideration. This volume differs much from its many predecessors of the like series, both in illustration and in general plan. As to the pictures, instead of being photographic reproductions, they are exclusively black and white pictures, all done by Miss Katharine M. Roberts. There is much to be said for both ways of illustration, though just now there seems to be a reaction in favour of really good photographs instead of drawings of the character made celebrated by Mr. New and his considerable band of disciples and followers. The pictures in this book are, for the most part, distinctly praiseworthy; those of the Guild Hall, Much Wenlock, and of Buildwas Abbey are among the best. Several are, to our mind, somewhat disfigured by the introduction of humanity on a large scale in the foreground of pictures which are intended in the main to bring before the eye surviving memorials of Shropshire's past history. Thus the drawing of the old bridge at Clun has a charm of its own, but the big British workman walking along in the foreground draws most of our attention, and we can't help wondering as we look at it whether the prim girl and the little child who are walking behind will succeed in overtaking him. In another really good picture of a difficult and remarkable subject, Stokesay Castle, the quaint blend of the varied architecture loses not a little of its attractiveness through the provoking presence of a well-drawn but impertinent little child swinging along to school with her slate flying behind her.

As to the plan of the book, there has been no idea in the editor's mind of forming an *olla podrida* or salad of somewhat incongruous subjects blended together to form an attractive whole; the method followed is to avoid any suspicion of scrappiness, and to give a clear idea of the past history of Shropshire viewed under several aspects. Thus, Mr. Auden, as editor, writes on the general story of the shire, and on its religious movements each side of the Reformation; Miss Auden, on the origin and evolution of the towns, and on its architectural story; and Mr. J. G. Auden on the Civil War, and on the schools. The editor also concludes the volume with brief sketches of illustrious Salopians. Miss Skeel writes on Ludlow and the Council of the Marches—a difficult subject for concise treatment, but well handled. Miss Burne writes the most generally attractive chapter on the subject of folk-lore, of which she is a well-known authority, introducing a variety of curious and little-known legends and customs pertaining to the county.

Miss Burne is able to tell us, from close study of the county, that there is considerable diversity of custom in different parts of Shropshire. Thus, south and west of the Severn, Mothering Sunday (the Fourth Sunday in

Lent) is still held of much account ; another name for it is Simnel Sunday, from the cakes presented and eaten on the occasion of this mild mid-Lent festivity. Shrewsbury retains its celebrity for Simnel cakes, which differ from the generality of those that are met with in Lancashire. The Shropshire Simnel is conservative in its formation ; it is a rich plum cake, round and flat, with a peculiar scalloped edge, and enclosed in a bright saffron-coloured edging ; the cake, too, ought always to be boiled before being baked. The name, as Miss Burne tells us, certainly comes from *siminella*, or fine flour ; it might have been added that it was a pittance delicacy occasionally served to the English Benedictines, as at Bury St. Edmunds, as early as the thirteenth century. The folk-etymology, however, of the good people of Salop derive the name, after a delightful fashion, from an imaginary old couple named *Sim* and *Nell*, who quarrelled as to whether they should boil or bake a projected delicacy, and finally, as a compromise, agreed to do both. The north-eastern part of Shropshire is, however, ignorant both of Mothering Sunday and Simnels ; but in that district All Saints' Eve is yet commonly observed, bands of children going from door to door droning a ditty, and begging for "soul cakes" or other gifts.

This is a book that is sure, we should think, to be appreciated by all intelligent Salopians. There seems to us to be only one mistake made by the editor, namely, the inclusion of a previously printed paper by the late Mr. Stanley Leighton on the "Old Families of the County." We rather grudge the space, when there is so very much material yet untouched relative to the county.

"ARMS, ARMOUR, AND ALABASTER," by GEORGE FELLOWS (Nottingham : H. B. Saxton). Under the above alliterative title Mr. Fellows has put together some readable and interesting notes as to certain old alabaster tombs in the neighbourhood of Nottingham. The secondary title is "A Brief Description of some Local Alabaster Altar Tombs." We heartily wish that antiquaries and descriptive writers would agree to give up the senseless and somewhat irreverent title of "altar tombs" ; it is an utterly misleading term. The very idea of life-sized recumbent effigies stretched out on the top of an altar is senseless as well as somewhat sacrilegious. A recent writer, who ought to have known better, in bringing out a small book on all the churches of Sussex actually stated in a glossary that an altar tomb is "a monument used for an altar." Such an explanation is, of course, as ridiculous as it is impossible ; possibly it would be best to substitute for this expression either table-tomb or chest-tomb.

The churches whose alabaster tombs are here described and illustrated are those that are to be found at Clifton, Colwick, Holme Pierrepont, Hoveringham, Nuttall, Radcliffe-on-Soar, Shelford, Stapleford, Strelley,



Willoughby, Wollerton, and Wysall. These alabaster monuments of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries are not only of much interest from an artistic point of view, but pertain to such distinguished and interesting local families as those of Sacheverell, Stanhope, Strelley, Pierrepont, Byron, Clifton, and others. The photographic plates by Mr. A. J. Loughton are most admirable of their kind, and there are also a few letterpress illustrations of heraldry and other details.

The more particular interest, however, in this handsome small quarto of some forty pages consists in the fact that the whole of the tombs and effigies are sculptured with much skill from the beautifully veined local alabaster. As to this material and its working, as well as the exact localities from which it came, Mr. Fellows treats briefly in the introduction. We wish he had been able to give us further information, but there is hardly anything here stated which has not already been put fully on record by Mr. W. H. St. John Hope in his two papers published respectively in 1891 and in 1901, the former in the *Archæologia* and the latter in the *Royal Archæological Journal*. There is no doubt whatever, as has been made manifest by the records of the Borough of Nottingham, that the working in this beautiful material was an important trade of that town. These craftsmen are entered in the Borough accounts under various names, such as "alablastermen," "kervers," "marblers," and "image-makers." In 1371 there is evidence of the high price paid for the delicate carving of this beautiful substance, for on June 6th payment was made to one Peter of Nottingham of the balance of three hundred marks for an altar-piece of alabaster made by him and placed on the high altar of the Chapel of St. George of Windsor. This piece of workmanship must have been of a large and elaborate character, for the price was equivalent to about £4,800 of the value of the present day. To transport this reredos from Nottingham to Windsor required a convoy of ten carts, eighty horses, and twenty men; the journey occupied seventeen days, and the expenses of transport amounted to £30—or about £1,720 of to-day.

These noble alabaster tombs are, naturally, to be found chiefly in the districts where the stone was quarried, as in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire; but they penetrated to all parts of the kingdom in cases where there was money enough to pay for the sculpture and carriage. So celebrated, indeed, did this alabaster craft become, that in the fifteenth century it crossed the seas to many parts of Christendom, more especially to all parts of France. There is actually a reredos of this Derbyshire alabaster, still in a good state of preservation, in a church in Iceland.

The one great quarry for this gypsum or alabaster was at Chellaston, a few miles to the south of Derby, where the material is still found in abundance, though in small pieces, beneath a substratum of marl. It

is now chiefly used for the manufacture of plaster. The great advantage of this material for sculpture when it could be obtained in large pieces is that it is soft and easily worked when first obtained, and most fortunately afterwards hardens by exposure. There was a ready method of carriage for the largest blocks of this gypsum to Nottingham, for the river Trent flows close to Chellaston. Mr. Fellows states that this material was also found at Tutbury, Staffordshire; and at Gotham, Radcliffe-on-Soar, and Wheatley, Notts.; but we wish he had been able to give us more particulars as to its use for monumental purposes from these different localities. It is certain, however, that Chellaston was the place from which the vast majority of the alabaster came that was used in mediæval days.

"THE YORKSHIRE COINERS AND OLD AND PREHISTORIC HALIFAX," by H. LING ROTH (F. King & Sons, Halifax). The story of the remarkable gang of Yorkshire coiners who flourished between 1767 and 1783 was put on record. Mr. Roth has used most exceptional diligence in gathering together all possible information from the files of the various early Yorkshire newspapers, from the records of York Castle, and from the large amount of correspondence relative to these coiners which is to be found amongst various official papers at the Record Office. Between the two dates just mentioned, the clipping and counterfeiting of coin was carried on to an astonishing extent in the West Riding of Yorkshire, particularly in the district known as Cragg Vale. In 1768 one Joseph Steel was sentenced to death at York for counterfeiting gold guineas, and in the following year a gang of some ten men were apprehended in the neighbourhood of Halifax for the same offence. The *Leeds Intelligencer* for June 27th, 1769, complained that a number of sweaters and filers of gold coin continued to infest the neighbourhood of Halifax with apparent impunity; whilst the *Leeds Mercury* of the following month asserted that counterfeit twenty-six shilling pieces were becoming common; purporting to be gold, they were really made of silver double gilt. In October of that year one David Hartley, well known by the name of "King David," the chief of the coiners, was apprehended at Halifax and sent under a strong guard to York Castle. This arrest made a great stir amongst David's fellow-coiners and sympathizers, and led to the murder in the following month of William Deighton, the supervisor at Halifax, to whose energy the arrest of David was due. The Government of the day, as well as the local authorities, made every effort to secure the arrest of the murderers, and proclamations were issued giving full particulars of more than a score of men who had absconded and who were suspected of being connected with the crime. Meanwhile, King David and another coiner were hung at York. But all the efforts to secure conviction for the murder of the supervisor were in vain. There were various subsequent executions for coining, the last of which was that of Thomas Spencer and Mark Sattonstall at Halifax

in August, 1783. These executions completely broke up the gang of coiners, although an occasional counterfeiter was still caught carrying on his illicit trade.

The latter part of this handsome volume deals with a great variety of subjects connected with the history of Halifax, and more particularly with its prehistoric remains. There are a large number of well-executed original illustrations, several of which, relating to the clipping of coins, will prove to be of some interest to numismatists. Another valuable set of illustrations, accompanied by good descriptive letterpress, deals with Halifax pottery, more particularly relative to the class of pot called "slip ware," which was made for many years at the pottery known as Pothowcaus, near Ovenden, Halifax. Specimens of this slip ware, which was made throughout the greater part of last century, now realize high prices. They are of a quaint, domestic character; young people about to be married would order loving-cups, or residents would order special articles, lettered and dated, to send to their friends.

Altogether, this volume, though rather loosely put together and of *olla podrida* character, is a most desirable book either for the antiquary or the general reader who may be interested in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

## News Items and Comments.

DR. F. HAVERFIELD, F.S.A., writes from Christ Church, Oxford, 20th March, 1907, as follows:—"I notice in the *RELIQUARY* (p. 63) two statements about which I should like to say a word. One is to the effect that in the *Warwickshire Victoria County History* 'the enamelled discs forming the handles of the Chesterton bowl' were described by one author as being Late Celtic, by another as Roman, and yet by a third as Saxon, and each author gave a different illustration. The other states that if certain antiquaries 'had troubled to read my book on Celtic art, they would have found the matter, the proper application of the term Late Celtic, very clearly explained.'

"The first statement seems incorrect. The Chesterton discs are only twice (and not thrice) illustrated and described in the *History*, and they are nowhere called Roman. On p. 258 Mr. Smith calls them Saxon, and on p. 221 Mr. Clinch seems to quote and accept an opinion of yours. Your statement seems somewhat unfortunately worded.

"The other statement is obscure in its reference. But, as one who has 'troubled' to read your book, I should like to say that it seems to me responsible for much of the confusion now prevailing on the meaning and use of the term 'Late Celtic,' because it puts together objects of very various Roman and pre-Roman dates without making clear that Late Celtic, despite the lateness, is not a phase of time as you use it."

1904

